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ABSTRACT

The processes by which women living in rural areas of Nepal acquire literacy and deploy it for their own purposes were examined in an exploration of the diverse perspectives of policymakers, fieldworkers, and participants in gender, literacy, and development. The study combined ethnography with a research methodology called participatory rural appraisal (PRA), which began as a development planning methodology based on an empowering process that allows all people, including weaker and poorer people, to collate, present, and analyze information. The following were among the issues explored: approaches to women's literacy in Nepal; language policy in literacy programs; nongovernmental organizations versus the classroom; gender and language policy; new versus old approaches to literacy and numeracy teaching; and the role of literacy in development ideologies. The study documented how factors outside literacy classrooms, including facilitators' educational background and local concepts about education, necessitate adapting literacy practices developed in the West to the specific social contexts of rural areas in developing countries. The following are among the items in the 13 appendixes: a map of the case study areas; examples of PRA activities conducted during fieldwork; who's who in HIL (Health Is Life) and Save; notes on the Nepali caste system; HIL lesson sheet (English name writing method); Kosalee mathematics; HIL mathematics sheets; record forms to be completed by Save women's groups every month; and an example of a Save USA funding proposal. (Contains 195 references.) (MN)

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ED 469 210

WHY EAT GREEN CUCUMBERS AT THE TIME OF DYING?

WOMEN'S LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN NEPAL

Anna Robinson-Pant

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Women's Literacy and Development in Nepal

Anna Robinson-Pant

UNESCO Institute for Education

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Cover picture:
Savitri, Tanka Maya and Laxmi often joke that they are "green cucumber", too old to learn to read and write. Yet, excluded from school as young girls, they now come to study at Arutar literacy ckass until late every night.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CERID	Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Development
DSE	German Foundation for International Development
ECD	Early Childhood Development
GAD	Gender And Development
IA	Intermediate in Arts (equivalent to 'A' Level)
Icomm	Intermediate in Commerce
IL	Intermediate in Law
INGO	International Non Governmental Organisation
LGM	Learner Generated Materials (or Locally Generated Materials)
NFE	Nonformal Education
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NL	New Literacy
NLS	New Literacy Studies
ODA	Overseas Development Administration
HIL	Health Is Life (local NGO)
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
REFLECT	Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
RRA	Rapid Rural Appraisal
Rs	Rupees (80 rupees to a pound)
SC or Save	Save the Children USA
SLC	School Leaving Certificate (equivalent to 'O' Level)
SPACE	Society for Participatory and Cultural Education
VDC	Village Development Committee
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas
WID	Women In Development

GLOSSARY OF NEPALI TERMS

bahun	Brahmin (highest caste)
bazaar	shopping area/ town centre
bikas	development
charpi	latrine
didi	elder sister
gaon	village
giard	locally brewed beer
hakim	boss
hisab	sum, calculation
Kosalee	a small gift (Save USA's advanced course)
maiti	woman's natal home
namaste	form of greeting
Naya Goreto	a new trail (Government literacy course)
roksi	alcohol (locally brewed spirits)
Sangalo	a collection (learners' writing published by Save USA)
tempo	three-wheeler taxi

KEY TO MY FIELDNOTES

Extracts from my fieldnotes are printed in italics

...	part of a sentence omitted
....	a sentence or more omitted
( )	my comments as observer of the scene
[ ]	my comments as editor of the fieldnotes

bikas (underlined words) : words quoted verbatim in Nepali or Newari in my fieldnotes
(All conversations in fieldnotes were in Nepali unless otherwise noted as Newari or English)

Names of speakers have been changed, unless they requested otherwise

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book has been developed from a thesis and eight months field research in Nepal (1995-96) conducted as part of a D Phil degree and funded by a studentship from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). Certain sections were then updated during a further stay in Nepal from 1997/8, when I was able to discuss the text with informants and colleagues in the country. The process of writing this book has been an enjoyable and exciting time, due to the many people who have given support, challenged my ideas and introduced me to new ways of understanding literacy and development. Though I cannot acknowledge them all by name here, at least the reader will meet many of them in the pages of this thesis.

As a D Phil student, I was fortunate in having two supervisors from different disciplines, anthropology and education. Professor Brian Street has been a perceptive critic throughout: pointing me towards new areas of enquiry, challenging my perspective on the field research and thesis writing, and on a practical level, always generous with his time and materials. Dr. Harry Torrance also advised on my research design, assisting me to make closer links between the New Literacy Studies and wider educational theory. Thanks also to Professor Lalage Bown, Dr. Fiona Leach, Dr. Carolyn Medel-Anonuevo and Bettina Bochynek for useful suggestions.

Several people have contributed unknowingly to this thesis. Professor Robert Chambers has been a constant source of encouragement on using PRA in research and also kept me updated on new approaches whilst in Nepal. Professor Alan Rogers has enthusiastically shared his insights and materials on literacy in Nepal. Dr. Georgia Kaufmann greatly contributed to my informal education as an anthropologist, as has Kim Hudson over the years through our frequent discussions on development, from her Nepal 'practitioner' perspective. Dr. Caroline Moser first encouraged my interest in gender, education and development through her stimulating teaching at the London School of Economics.

My fieldwork in Nepal could not have taken place without the support of so many friends and colleagues, particularly at Save and HIL. At Save Kathmandu, Udaya Manandhar, Keith Leslie and Ghanashyam Khatiwada helped me to set up the research. In Arughat, many Save colleagues gave me a lot of time, friendship and support, especially Nirala Tiwari, Saraswathi Karki and Dirgha Gandhari. Thanks above all to the Shrestha family who looked after us so well in Arutar; to Bhuwan, Alina and didiharu (sisters) at the Arutar class. At HIL, Ram Dongol helped set up the research, and Nani Gwala spent many dark cold nights accompanying me to the initial classes. I would also like to thank all the supervisors, class participants and facilitators - especially Sharda, Dos Maya, Bina, Anita, Nirmala, Astha and Mahendra. Thanks to Leela and Nabendra Dahal, Jane and Simon Howarth for personal support in Kathmandu.

Writing in the UK, I enjoyed the company of my DPhil colleagues in our communal computer room where we have exchanged many ideas and reflections. Above all, my family have offered continuous support. My parents have given assistance throughout, and without my husband Mahesh, I would never have started or finished this piece of work. He has constantly encouraged me,

supported me practically and intellectually by challenging many of my ideas about Nepal and my interpretation of events. Our son, Ben, has *lived* a lot of this book, from joining in the rice harvest in Arutar to suffering the long arduous journeys by foot and crowded bus to and from the field sites. Our daughter, Anita, spent the first part of her life (and most of her time *inside*) in front of the computer while I completed the thesis. Both she and Ben, with his daily insistence, "have you still not finished your book?" have ensured I got on with the writing!

FOREWORD

Anna Robinson-Pant's book represents a classic example of the link between research and practice. Her account of literacy and development amongst women in Nepal offers an important antidote to the dominant assumptions about literacy, women and development based on statistical accounts of literacy 'levels'; correlations of 'literacy' with 'indicators' of women's health, 'empowerment' etc.; and unrealistic ideas about the significance of literacy for rural women in Development contexts. What Anna Robinson-Pant provides instead is a subtle and nuanced account of what it means for local women to engage in a range of literacy practices in specific social contexts. The focus here is on the processes by which people acquire literacy and deploy its use for their own purposes rather than on some universal skill called 'literacy' or an essential category called 'woman'. The strength of the book lies in the close local knowledge that she brings to bear on this subject, deriving from many months of close observation, living with local people, knowledge of the language and keeping of detailed field notes in ethnographic style. And we are provided with these notes directly, not just in re-worked form. The detailed accounts of women's views are presented partly through use of telling quotations interspersed with the author's own text. Likewise, this text is itself subtly layered, between the voice of the author bringing academic and development discourses to bear on the account, and quotations that give us the voice of the fieldworker, raw and immediate in the field itself. The reader, then, engages with the book at a number of levels, hearing the voices of those involved in literacy activity on the ground - local Nepalese women, agency workers, teachers and students, the researcher herself talking with various actors and reflecting in her own mind about what their engagement in literacy means - as well as the more usual author's voice as she tries to help us make sense of it all despite our distance from the scene. In keeping with the interactive approach to the fieldwork itself, the author asks the reader to interact with her text, to read the quotations from different parties and set these against her own commentary, to bring our own experience of literacy to bear, to engage with the 'long conversation' of which this book is a part. That engagement offers us a different role from that usually constructed for readers about literacy and development, as simply receivers of information.

This shift in the text is symptomatic of the changed character of literacy studies themselves in recent years. We are no longer so sure of what literacy is and even less of what it means to different users, so we need more qualitative studies like this one to help us answer our questions about literacy in development. This also leads to us changing the questions themselves. What earlier 'experts' wanted to know was whether and how literacy led to changed perceptions, skills and behaviour and how to persuade people to engage in literacy classes in order to achieve these effects. The focus was particularly on those who didn't come forward for classes yet appeared to the organisers in need of them and on those who did come to the classes but then dropped out of the programmes before they were complete. Questions of 'motivation' and 'provision' were high on this agenda. What we now ask are more complex and reflexive questions, to do with our own role in 'providing' literacy, and with the different meanings and uses of literacy practices in different

contexts. We find ourselves having to ask 'which literacies' might different potential students want, where and when, rather than starting from certainty about our notion of literacy and then pondering why others did not come forward for it. Like education more broadly, the answers to such difficult questions vary according to context. Anna Robinson-Pant's book helps us both to ask these new questions and to identify some possible answers.

Thinking about her title, for instance, might lead us to ask which literacies might be appropriate for older women in rural Nepal. Some older women, it seems, might view literacy as something for younger people and those engaged with working practices to do with 'outsiders'. From this perspective literacy is no more relevant to them than the luxury green cucumbers of the title are to people about to die. Evidence from other contexts suggests we cannot just take such views at face value. A literacy project in South Africa, funded by the Department for International Development, instigated by Help Age International, for instance, has taken the position that people are never too old to learn and has responded to a request for literacy classes from women in a local 'Society for the Aged' (Muthande). But these classes are not necessarily the same as those provided for other users, they cannot just be pulled off a peg and made available. The older women themselves wanted to be the tutors, not just to receive tuition from standard literacy practitioners. The classes and the content had to be negotiated according to their perceptions and needs. Amongst other things, older women in this context wanted to be able to manage receiving their pension from State agencies, so the literacy classes involved not just learning letters and decoding but also had input from support services. A study of the kind which Anna Robinson-Pant provides in Nepal, that placed such provision in the wider cultural context sensitive in particular to gender needs and categories, could tell us a lot more about what literacy means to these women, what the classes have offered them and what they have done with their new literacy. In that sense, Anna Robinson-Pant's book has an important role to play not only in telling us about women and literacy in Nepal, but also in helping us to ask questions about literacy practices in other parts of the world. As we build up knowledge of literacy in practice from different parts of the world, based on these new questions and these new ways of observing, so our picture of literacy will become fuller and richer: the map will be filled in, the colours and outlines become clearer. We will be able to see behind the statistics. With this new map of literacy we will be in a better position to develop policy and learning/teaching practices that respond to these different situations. In years to come, we may come back to this study as an important precursor of a trend towards filling in the map of literacy world-wide.

But is there a conflict here? Are qualitative approaches to literacy, especially those that employ ethnographic methods as Anna Robinson-Pant does, really compatible with the needs of policy? The more that ethnographers explain the 'complexity' of literacy practices, the more policy makers find it impossible to design programmes that can take account of all that complexity. The more ethnographers demonstrate that literacy does not necessarily have the effects that the rhetoric has suggested - improved health, cognition, empowerment - the harder does it become for policy makers to persuade funders to support literacy programmes. The more ethnographers focus on specific local contexts, the harder does it seem to 'upscale' their projects to take account of the large numbers of people seen to be in need. As one of the generals in charge of the literacy programme in

Egypt said to me, 'your micro accounts of different literacies for different people are no help to us in our Campaign; I have 10 million illiterates'. So how does the present book bridge this apparent divide between policy and research in general, and in particular between large scale needs and micro ethnographic approaches? The fact that UNESCO conferred the International Award for Literacy Research for this work indicates the importance that this leading organisation in literacy work attributes to bridging the research and practice divide and more specifically to the value of qualitative and ethnographic approaches to literacy. And the author herself makes clear that this is not just an academic dissertation, earning credit in university circles and enhancing her own career, but also part of a broader commitment to applied work. Anna Robinson-Pant represents that new breed of 'practical epistemologist' to which the educationalist Ron Barnett refers in analysing the role of academics in the contemporary world. Because the sources of knowledge are now seen to be varied and not just controlled or legitimated by the academy, academics are obliged to address issues of public concern and to defend the grounds and legitimacy of their own particular knowledge industry in ways that they did not in the past. But at the same time there is, according to Barnett, still a major role for the universities as defining and developing particular kinds of knowledge, namely a critical reflexive and dynamic model of knowledge, in contrast to the theory of knowledge that underpins much corporate and public life, which treats knowledge as information and advocacy. It is from this perspective that the new approaches to research in literacy have a contribution to make to policy. The present book lies firmly within the ambit of a critical, reflexive and dynamic theory of knowledge and its contribution to the field of literacy policy is precisely its ability to reflect critically on what is taken for granted and to help us think through radical and challenging possibilities. It is both critical epistemology and at the same time practical. As Anna Robinson-Pant says in her introduction, 'This study is an attempt to bridge the gap between policy makers, fieldworkers and participants by bringing together their different perspectives on gender, literacy and development. Rather than simply documenting how each actor responds to the other's perspective, I aim to suggest ways in which the 'interface' between development workers and participants in literacy can be researched and used to inform programme planning'. She has herself already been involved in these two way processes and it will be the measure of this book how far it helps others similarly working at the 'interface', such as the Egyptian general to whom the book answers: 'we can't change things at a macro level unless we understand also the micro level and the interface between them'.

As supervisor of the original thesis from which the book is drawn and at the same time an active consultant myself in literacy and development, I see the book as a major contribution to my own and my partners' understandings of these processes. I look forward to engaging with the complex and stimulating ideas for many years to come. 'Why eat green cucumbers at the time of dying?' - why take on the luxury of new literacy practices when your communicative repertoire seems already sufficient? - because, says Anna Robinson-Pant 'learning to read - like eating cucumber in rural areas - is both a luxury and a challenge when you are old' (indeed, at any age). Taking on reading, taking on new readings, taking on new literacy practices, broadening the communicative repertoire, challenging dominant epistemologies are continuing processes, not a one-off shift from 'illiteracy' to 'literacy', from dark to light, as the early approaches to literacy work

would have it. There are always new things to experience and learn and life can always be enhanced - even at the time of dying!

Brian V. Street
(King's College London)

NEPALI TRANSLATION OF SUMMARY AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

नेपालीमा सारांस

यो अनुसन्धानले महिला शाक्षरता र विकास संबन्धी बहसलाइ अघि बढाउदै "कस्तो किसिमको शाक्षरताले कस्तो किसिमको बिकास ल्याउछ र कसका लागि" भन्ने सवाल उठाउछ। शाक्षरतुनुका कारण र त्यसमा निहित बैचारिक धारणाहरुको बारेमा महिला शाक्षरता कार्यक्रमका सहभागी तथा आयोजकहरुका फरक-फरक दृष्टिकोणहरु छन्। यसको मतलब यो हो कि नत केबल एउटै किसिमको मात्र शाक्षरता छ नत एउटै किसिमको बिकास नै। यस परिप्रेक्षमा महिला शाक्षरता र बिकास बिचको संबन्धलाइ यसमा संलग्न विभिन्न पक्षहरुको, जस्तै सहभागी, सहयोगी शिक्षक, योजनाकार - सैधान्तिक एवं व्यबहारिक दृष्टिकोणको आधारमा बुझने प्रयास गर्नूपर्छ।

यो अध्ययनको मूख्य उद्देष्य कसरी मानवशास्त्रीय (ethnographic) अनुसन्धान पद्धतीको प्रयोगले जेण्डर, शाक्षरता र बिकास बारेमा स्थानीय र अर्न्तराष्टिय छलफल तथा अन्तरक्रियालाइ बुझन सघाउछ भन्ने कुरा पत्तालगाउनु हो। नेपालमा गैरसरकारी संस्था द्वारा सञ्चालित दुइवटा शाक्षरता कार्यक्रमको सुक्ष्म अध्ययनको माध्यमद्वारा म सहभागी महिलाहरुको शाक्षरताप्रतिको धारणालाई बुझने प्रयासगर्छु, र त्यसको आधारमा सहभागी तथा योजनाकार बिचको संबन्धलाई कसरी अनुसन्धान गर्न सकिन्छ भन्ने बारेमा सुझाब दिन्छु।

सहभागी तथा सहयोगी दुबैका शाक्षरता संबन्धी आ-आफनै सिद्धान्त र खाकाहरु हुन्छन जसले कार्यक्रम कार्यन्वयनमा प्रभाव पार्दछन भन्ने मान्यताको आधारमा म यो बिश्लेषण गर्छु कि कसरी बिकास संस्थाका नीतिहरु कक्षाकोठाको क्रियाकलापमा रुपान्तरित हुन्छन। सामाजिक संबन्धहरुले (जेण्डर लगायत) योजना कार्यान्वयनमा खेलेको भूमिकाको बारे मानवशास्त्रीय अनुसन्धानको माध्यमद्वारा म गैरसरकारी संस्थाको उल्लेखित भाषागत नीति तथा महिला सहभागी र सहयोगी शिक्षकले कक्षाकोठाको भाषाको चयन संबन्धमा गरेका निर्णयको अध्ययन गर्छु। त्यसपछि म मैले अबलोकन गरेका शाक्षरता कक्षाहरुमा प्रयोग गरिएका अंक तथा अक्षर पठनपाठनका बिधिहरु, खास गरेर नया बिधिहरु, जस्तै (learner generated materials) मा ध्यान केन्द्रीत गर्दछु। म यो हेर्छु कि किन र कसरी बिभिन्न शाक्षरता बिधिहरु एउटै गांठोमा बांधीन पुगेका छन्, र कसरी कार्यमूलक र फेरीयन जस्ता मार्कोहरु व्यवहारमा अर्थहिन साबितहुन पुग्छन्। म यो तर्क गर्छुकी जुन किसिमको शाक्षरता र गणीत संबन्धी पढाइ पढाइदैछन त्यो शाक्षरता संबन्धी दर्शन वा बिधिमा भएका परिबर्तन बाट भन्दा मूख्यत प्रौढकक्षाको खास अवस्था र सहभागी तथा सहयोगी शिक्षकको शिक्षा संबन्धी अनुभवबाट प्रभाबित छन्।

कक्षा कोठा बाहिर म गैरसरकारी संस्थाको कार्यक्रमसंग आबद्ध बिकास अबधारणाको बिश्लेषण गर्छु र हेर्छु कसरी ती संस्थाहरुले आफना बिकास सन्देषहरु प्रशारित गरेका थिए, र कसरी सहभागी तथा सहयोगीले तिनको प्रतिबाद गरेका थिए। बिकास अबधारणाहरु न केबल शब्दमा मात्र व्यक्त गरिन्छन बल्की व्यबहारमा पनि, त्यसैले गहनतम छलफल (discourse) को धारणाले शब्द र व्यबहार बिचको फरकलाई बिश्लेषण गर्ने माध्यम प्रदान गर्छ। मानवशास्त्रीय अनुसन्धान पद्धतीको

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प्रयोगले योजनाविद, कार्यक्रम सञ्चालक र सहभागीहरुका विचारलाइ योजना निमार्ण संबन्धी प्रकृयामा कसरी समेटन सकिन्छ भन्नेबारेमा मद्दत पुरयाउन सक्छ।

कसरी र कुन परिस्थितिमा मैले प्रयोग गरेको अनुसन्धानको तरिका योजनाकारहरुकोलागि उपयोगी हुनसक्छ? मानवशास्त्रीय अनुसन्धानमा अवधारणाहरुलाइ कसरी तर्कपूण बनाउन सकिन्छ (जस्तै कक्षा बिचमा छोडने) भन्ने जस्ता विषयहरु समावेश छन र यसले शाक्षरता र भाषा योजना संबन्धी परिवर्तीत (transformative) विधिलाइ जोडदिन्छ। त्यसबेला महिला शाक्षरता र बिकास बिचको संबन्धलाइ एउटा गतिशील प्रकृया, जसमा स्थानीय महिलाहरुले पनि योजनाविदहरुको हेराइमा प्रभाव पार्न सक्छन, को रुपमा हेरिन्छ, न कि एउटा निष्कृय समायोजन जुन योजनाविदहरुले मात्र हासगर्न सक्छन।

कृतज्ञता ज्ञापन
मेरो अनुसन्धानकोकाम मैले सोचेभन्दा रमाइलो र चाखलाग्दो रहयो। यस सिलसिलामा म धुप्रै नया साथीहरुको संपर्कमा पुगे जसले मलाइ हरतरहबाट सहयोग पुरयाए, मेरा बिचारहरुलाई प्रतिबाद गरे र अनुसन्धानको कामलाई एउटा रमाइलो तथा उत्साहित अनुभवमा परिणत गरिदिए। यद्यपी ति सबै व्यक्तिहरुको नाम म यहा उल्लेखगर्न सक्दिन तर कम्तीमा पनि पाठकहरुले ति मध्ये धेरैजसोलाइ यस किताबका पानाहरुमा भेटनुहुने छ।

मेरो नेपालको फिल्ड अनुसन्धान "सेभ" तथा "हिलका" साथीहरुको सहयोग बिना संभबहुने थिएन। यसकोलागि म सेभ काठमाण्डुका श्री उदय मानन्धर, कीथ लेसली र घनश्याम खतिवडालाइ अनुसन्धानकार्य सञ्चालन गर्नमा पुरयाएको सहयोगकोलागि धन्यवाद दिन चाहन्छु। यसकासाथै उक्त अफिसका अन्य व्यक्तिहरु जसले आफनो अमुल्य समय वा सामग्री उपलब्ध गराएर सहयोग पुरयाए उनिहरुकोलागि पनि धन्यवाद दिन चाहन्छु। आरुघाटमा सेभका धेरै साथिहरुले उनिहरुको समय, साथीत्व र आद्धिएर सहयोग पुरयाए जसमध्ये नीराला तीवारी, सरस्वती कार्की र दिर्घ गान्धारी मुख्य छन। साथै सबै भन्दा अधि आरुटारका श्रेष्ठ परिवार, जसले मेरो परिवारको राम्रो हेरबिचार पुरयाए, का साथै अन्य साथीहरु (भुवन, एलिना र आरुटार शाक्षरता कक्षाका दिदिहरुमा धन्यवाद दिन चाहन्छु। हिल अफिसका श्री राम डंगोलले अनुसन्धानकार्य सञ्चालन गर्नमा मद्दत पुरयाए र नानी ग्वालाले चिसा, अंधेरा रातहरुमा शाक्षरता कक्षामा जान साथ दिएर सहयोग पुरयाइन। यसकासाथै ती सबै सुपरभाइजर, शाक्षरता कक्षाका सहभागी तथा सहयोगी शिक्षकहरु बिशेष गरेर शारदा, दशभाया, बिना, अनिता, निर्मला र अष्ठलाइ धन्यवाद दिन चाहन्छु।

म यो आसा गर्दछुकी मैले आरुघाट तथा ललितपुरका ति व्यक्तिहरु (जो संग म संगै भएर काम गरें) का बिचारलाइ इमान्दारी पुर्वक प्रस्तुत गरेको छु। मैले यो किताब लेख्नुको मूख्य उद्देष्य ति व्यक्तिहरुका बिचारलाइ बृहत छलफलको घेरा भित्र ल्याउनु हो। मलाइ आसा छ यस कममा मैले ति बिचारहरुलाइ गलत ढंगबाट प्रस्तुत गरेको छैन, न त उनीहरुलाइ चोट पुरयाउने काम नै।

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CHAPTER ONE

Signing the attendance register at a women's group meeting in Arutar

CHAPTER ONE

EXPLORING THE LINK BETWEEN WOMEN'S LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

> *"Morne bela hariyo kakra"* (Why eat green cucumbers at the time of dying?). *Sanumaiya from Changanathali tells me what her neighbours shout at her as she goes to the adult class:*
> *16/2/96, field notes*
>
> *"A better educated mother has fewer and better educated children. She is more productive at home and in the workplace. And she raises a healthier family since she can better apply improved hygiene and nutritional practices..."*
> *(King and Hill, 1993: 12)*

In many developing countries, literacy has been seen as the key to 'women's development' resulting in a proliferation of women's literacy programmes run by both Governments and Non Governmental Organisations. Nepal is one such example of a country where literacy programmes have been used extensively as an entry point for involving women in development activities. My own experience of working in this field in Nepal has made me question what impact these literacy programmes have on women's lives : in particular, I have wondered whether there is a strong link between gaining literacy skills and change, and whether the kind of literacy programmes currently provided meet women's perceived needs. This research is intended to provide new insights into why and how women's literacy programmes work - from the participants' point of view - thereby exploring future directions for such programmes, as well as new research approaches.

My research in Nepal was focused on two Non Governmental Organisations running development programmes with a literacy component for adult women and was originally written in the form of a PhD thesis, based on eight months ethnographic field work. By studying programmes with contrasting approaches to literacy teaching and in very different areas of the country, I hoped to expand the common debate around the question *does literacy bring development?* into a consideration of *what kind of literacy brings what kind of development to whom?* This introductory chapter outlines key issues around women's literacy and development in order to show how my own project both draws upon and challenges the research to date.

Exploring the link between development and women's literacy

My two opening quotations regarding the education of adult women reveal the polarised perspectives of the 'recipients' (Sanumaiya's comment) and the 'providers' of women's literacy programmes (King and Hill of the World Bank) - not just in their reasons, but in the way they express that ideology. The instrumental view of women's education as a means to a healthier population typifies the economic and social rationales (Wagner, 1995) usually given for the promotion of women's literacy in developing countries. As Patkar (1995: 405) discusses in relation to India:

> "literacy is presented as the panacea of the moment...accorded the status of a miracle drug, the literacy issue has become a sort of numbers game for the Government of India.."

If literacy is accepted as the key to development, the issue is then only how to make sufficient numbers of people literate in as short as possible a period of time. The large gap between men's and women's literacy rates (World Bank, 2000: 233) means that women are usually the prime target of such mass campaign approaches.

Illiteracy has been identified as both a symptom and a cause of underdevelopment. Statistical analysis has shown significant correlation between women's literacy rates and other indicators of development: for example, an inverse relationship between education and fertility (Cochrane, 1982) and a link between women's education and low child mortality (Schultz, 1993). Such correlations have been then used in a policy context to suggest that "in Africa, for example, increasing female literacy by 10% could lower infant mortality by 10%" (Psacharopoulos, 1995: 9). Often the policy implications are stated indirectly, simply by placing such correlations in policy documents: e.g. "In the Southern Indian state of Kerala where literacy is universal, the infant mortality rate is the lowest in the entire developing world." (Unicef, 1999:8). Researchers vary in how far they analyse why or how there is a statistical correlation between women's literacy

rates and various social phenomena: Le Vine (1982) for example, discusses in psychological terms how education could affect women's behaviour towards their children thus accounting for higher child health indicators. What is surprising about the majority of these studies however is how readily correlation is taken as causality, as if significant correlation automatically indicates a cause-effect relationship.

Besides avoiding discussion of the "complex nature of causality" (Bown, 1990a: 13), many researchers also tend to use the terms 'education' and 'literacy' synonymously. Bown points out that "much of the research cited internationally as *proofs* of a connection between women's literacy and such phenomena as lower infant mortality rates and smaller family size are actually based on a correlation between levels of *school education* and these phenomena." (ibid.). The statistical analysis therefore makes no distinction between "basic literacy versus literacy as a by-product of schooling" (Patkar, 1995: 406). By merging the two kinds of statistics, the policy makers tend to assume that adult women's literacy programmes would produce the same effect as the schooling of young girls. Implicit in these arguments that equate literacy with education is the assumption of a single uniform literacy which is imparted through schools and adult classes. The concept of "multiple literacies" (Street, 1984) has led to a redefinition of literacy, moving away from measuring **how much literacy**, to a consideration of **what kind of literacy** is being introduced to produce certain effects. Whether individuals can be classified as either 'literate' or 'illiterate' (the basis of statistical studies) is then brought into question.

Critics of the earlier cited attempts to present a direct statistical relationship between women's literacy and development have also pointed to the fact that "literacy, like education in general, is not the driving force of historical change" (1975 Declaration of Persepolis, quoted in Bown, 1990a: 8). Bown emphasises that women's literacy "has to be seen as one component in development" (ibid.: 38). She moves away from the idea of one kind of development that can be measured through mortality or nutrition rates, suggesting that development is not just measured in terms of societal change, but in relation to individuals and their perceptions. I discuss later how the concept of development - like the concept of literacies rather than one literacy - needs to be considered in relation to the different perspectives of individual participants.

The above section suggests how ideas of women's literacy and various measurements of development such as lowered child mortality were believed to be connected unproblematically and statistically proved. Critics of this approach have questioned how far correlation can be taken as causation, whether literacy and schooling statistics can be used interchangeably, whether literacy can be considered as the main element in development and even how far the measurements of literacy are meaningful. These critiques have resulted in new research directions in the field of women's literacy: I will briefly outline where my own research fits in.

Recent approaches to research on women's literacy

The field of women's literacy has been described as an "utterly under-researched area" (Bown, 1990a: 41), "rarely treated in an integrated and systematic way" (Lind, 1989: 6). Recently however, from the critique of the statistical attempts to link women's literacy and development, several clear research directions have emerged. Many researchers have now turned their attention to the impact of adult women's literacy as opposed to school girls' literacy and increasingly emphasise the need for qualitative research methods in relation to women's literacy (Dighe, 1995a). Bown's 1990 study is based on a case-study approach which was used to investigate the impact of ActionAid literacy programmes on women's lives. Although qualitative methods are used, the analysis of this study still centres on a cause/effect model of literacy producing certain changes. Many evaluation reports of women's literacy programmes are based on methods similar to Bown's, of using case studies of individuals to assess the impact of the classes in terms of set outcomes. For example, Leve (1997: 26) measures the impact of Save USA (Nepal) literacy classes on women's empowerment in terms of set indicators such as the percentage of women "who have intervened to stop a man from beating his wife" or who "attend women's group meetings". The majority of studies of women's literacy in Nepal follow similar quantitative methods of analysis, using case studies to illustrate the key points (Robinson-Pant, 1995, 1998). My own use of case studies here is intended, not as illustration or evidence of the **impact** of literacy, but to explore the processes involved in women becoming literate.

A major new direction also suggested by Bown's work was to bring in the perspective of the women participants. This movement towards focusing more on the "recipients" than the "providers of literacy" (Prinsloo, 1995) has been influenced by the new participatory development paradigms and produces both different research questions and differing methods of data collection and analysis. However, research emphasising women's reproductive and productive roles (Moser, 1989, 1993), which attempts to evaluate how they could better contribute to "development" in a narrow economic sense, often fails to consider the different ways in which *women's* literacy, as opposed to *men's* literacy, could be researched. Such research has tended to use conceptual models taken from Western feminism which might not be relevant in a developing country context, an example being the theoretical model of exclusive private and public spheres (Kelly and Elliott, 1982:3). In my own research, I had a different starting point of trying to understand the women participants' ideologies of gender and of development. Thus I focused on women, not simply as the objects of the literacy programme, but as having a different perspective on both literacy and on programmes which could shape the methodology as well as the content of the research[1].

The issue of the ownership and direction of research lies behind my above analysis in that the questions of policy makers has tended to dictate the research agenda in women's literacy. Much

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[1] This distinction is articulated by Crowley and Himmelweit (1992 : 1) in the introduction to their book with the deliberately ambiguous title **Knowing Women** : " 'Knowing women' no longer just means developing knowledge about women in which women feature as the *objects* of knowledge. It also means understanding the subjective process whereby women understand, create and use knowledge."

research (including Bown's 1990 report which aimed to influence ODA educational policy) has been commissioned by government or NGOs with the intention of informing policy directly. "Bottom-up research approaches" (Barton, 1995) by contrast begin with the literacy participants' perspectives and what questions are generated from their point of view: examples are ethnographic studies such as Yates' (1994) study of a functional literacy programme in Ghana, Kell's (1994) research in South Africa (see also Prinsloo & Breier, 1996) and Doronila's (1996) work in the Philippines. The question of *whose research?* not only influences the methodology used but as I suggested in the opening two quotations of this chapter, determines whose ideology is the starting point for defining 'development'. In this book, I look at how the local NGO planners, trainers and participants influenced not only the literacy programmes concerned, but my own research agenda.

The link between literacy and development has been complicated by the questions, "What kind of literacy? Why literacy?" (Patkar, 1995: 408). Gillette broadens the debate further by introducing the concept of different kinds of development: "what kind of development we have will condition what kind of women's literacy is either available or appropriate" (1992). In my opening section, by adopting the "indicators of development" usually used by planners and policy makers (e.g. decreasing child mortality and fertility rates), I avoided the problem of defining 'development'. The question "what is development?" is notably absent from most accounts of women's literacy programmes. Lind (1989) and Stromquist (1990), for example, criticise existing literacy programmes for not taking account of women's constraints and needs, but they do not question the planners' ideology of 'development'. In the analysis of two women's literacy programmes, I therefore foreground the question of what development (including literacy) means to both the policy makers, the field workers and the women participants. As my observation of the literacy classrooms will show, although literacy planners and participants would state their objectives as 'development', they do not always use the term in the same way. My analysis of the link between women's literacy and development is thus based on the concept of development as a discourse rather than quantifiable development outcomes, such as evaluating women's increased income or decision making in the household. The following section outlines the theoretical framework which I used as a basis for analysing the development processes taking place in the projects I observed.

Finding a new framework : development as a discourse

The theme of development as a discourse has tended to arise through ethnographic research such as mine, which looks at the implementation process of development projects. From early roots in Westerners creating texts about "the natives", anthropology now encompasses a focus on the way that other cultures are represented in such texts, looking at how Western countries not only dominated their colonies politically and economically, but used their power to represent a certain image of, for example, the "Oriental" (Said, 1979). Leading on from this idea of representations and colonial power has come an interest in development as a similarly dominating discourse.

Escobar (1995: 216) defines discourse as "not the expression of thought; it is a practice, with conditions, rules and historical transformations". He discusses "the impact of development representations .. at the local level" (ibid.: 51) and points to the features of such institutions that we can analyse, such as "the pervasive use of labels by the development discourse in the form of client categories and 'target groups', such as 'small farmers', 'pregnant women'....Labels are by no means neutral; they embody concrete relationships of power and influence the categories with which we think and act" (ibid.: 109).

Analysing Women in Development (WID) as one development discourse, Mbiliniyi (1984) suggests that the WID ideology promoted by the Tanzanian government in the '80s was based on a neo-colonial assumption that all women share the same oppression as women, whatever their class or nation, and this limited women's role in development. Though by the late seventies, the conceptual framework of GAD (Gender and Development) had been developed by a group of Western academics, using the relations of men and women as a starting point (Young, 1993: 134), rather than the biological difference of women as in WID, the discourse to a certain extent remains unchanged. The Third World woman still tends to be constructed as part of a homogeneous powerless group (Mohanty, 1991), a passive victim of development. GAD has become institutionalised through gender training and planning methodologies: within the field of gender planning, "training" is considered an essential component to enable policy makers, planners and even participants of programmes to become gender aware rather than gender blind (Moser, 1993, Kabeer 1994). The ideology underpinning the language of "training" expressed here has parallels with ideas about the autonomous model of literacy (associated with seeing, blindness, a one-off injection) which I discuss in Chapter 3, but does not seem to have been addressed in the literature on gender planning[2].

In this study, I am not just interested in describing the development discourses I came across but aim to find ways of researching literacy that might ease the tension at local level that Hobart (1993) discusses: "the overlap of developers' and local discourses does not lead to improved communication, but to strain on those locals who are involved in both, and to techniques of evasion, silence and dissimulation" (ibid.). This focus on the "interface" (Villareal, 1992) between outsiders and local groups has implications not just for research but planning methodologies. In Chapter 5 for example, I use the concept of overlapping discourses to analyse how facilitators and participants reacted to unfamiliar educational ideologies such as 'whole language' and relate this to a more "transformative" approach to language planning. The "interface" is the focus of my field research and my analysis is based on certain events where I observed "battles over images and meaning" (Villareal, 1992: 264) of development. Chapter 6 looks more directly at the development ideologies, such as Women In Development (WID), underlying the literacy-focused analyses of the earlier chapters.

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[2] Though Kabeer (1994) discusses the "ways of knowing" that have dominated the production of knowledge in development studies (such as GNP to measure development), she does not go on to analyse "gender training" as one "way of knowing".

I have tried to avoid generalised notions of gender, through using an ethnographic approach to research. White (1992) provided me with an alternative perspective in her Bangladesh research, "by concentrating on how women exercise power, rather than their 'status', the hope is to replace a passive, negative stress on how women are perceived with an active positive one on how they act, taking account of women's own perceptions and descriptions of what they do" (ibid.: 7). The concepts that White discusses provide analytical tools, not just for looking at the construction of gender in the field situations I studied in Nepal, but for deconstructing the dominant WID and GAD discourses I came across in training programmes, planning sessions and meetings. In my own case study analysis, I draw not just on the opposing concepts of gender brought out in texts such as White's, but show how ethnographic research approaches can lead to a greater understanding of the interaction between local and international discourses on gender, literacy and development.

The aims of this research

The link between women's literacy and development has tended to be analysed in terms of statistical outcomes and has not even required going inside a school or class (Carter, 1996). The predominant development discourse, that of modernisation, "the productionist notion of education...as if Western style schooling produces rational individuals" (ibid.) has thus limited how researchers like Le Vine, Cochrane et al view education, literacy and women's role. By contrast, I see my research more in terms of documenting a process - of women "taking hold" of literacy (Kulick and Stroud, 1993 : 55) as opposed to the usual image of women as passive recipients of a literacy programme. The term "literacy practices" offers a means of focusing on the particular ways in which people think about and do reading and writing in cultural contexts (Street, forthcoming). By using an ethnographic approach to explore how women's literacy interacts with 'development' in the widest sense of the word, I have moved away from attempts to measure literacy or development and from the cause/effect model of analysis used in many qualitative evaluations of literacy programmes (the "productionist" discourse).

This study is an attempt to bridge the gap between policy makers, fieldworkers and participants by bringing together their different perspectives on gender, literacy and development. Rather than simply documenting how each actor responds to the other's perspective, the aim is to find ways in which the "interface" between development workers and participants in literacy can be researched and used to inform programme planning. Regarding the original form of this research as an academic thesis, I feel in the unusual position of not being constrained by the priorities of any aid donor to prove "outcomes" or policies. However, because of my desire to produce useful research, I eventually did become involved as an actor in a two way process with

the NGOs and communities I studied. This interaction was the most challenging and rewarding part of this research and I hope that this book can convey the vibrancy of the literacy events I observed and participated in.

CHAPTER TWO

A view from the path leading to Arughat from the roadhead (an eight hour walk)

CHAPTER TWO

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

Finding my way : exploring the methodological issues at a theoretical level

Ethnography: representative and useful?

The methodology of this study has been influenced by the theoretical frameworks described in the previous chapter: development as discourse and literacy as a social practice. In the research aims, I made two major assumptions: that ethnography can explore and reflect the processes of literacy and development addressed here better than other research methods and that such research can prove useful in practical ways. My decision to use an ethnographic research approach reflected this ideological stance, rather than remaining at the level of techniques or methods.

Viewing literacy and development as social processes, I needed a research methodology that could explore and analyse the complexities rather than attempt to quantify outcomes or products of development programmes. Though ethnographic studies have been criticised for being too subjective or not being explicit about how the link between data and theory is made (Hammersley, 1992), I felt that the concept of "reflexivity" enables the researcher to reflect on his/her role and influence on data, not just during the fieldwork process but also during the writing of the text: the tensions between the "writing versus the doing" of ethnography (Jackson, 1990). Sanjek (1990) describes the need for an "ethnography or the ethnography" to show how the text was constructed: in this chapter, I explore my role as field researcher and as writer. I have tried to be open about the limitations of my data, particularly the case study material, and the bias that I have imposed in representation as well as analysis. Mitchell makes the distinction between a "telling" and a "typical" case, suggesting that its value in analysis lies in "its explanatory power" rather than its typicality (1984: 203). The criteria that I used for choosing literacy programmes for this study and for selecting events or individuals were aimed at identifying "telling" rather than "typical" cases.

The other assumption I make about ethnography in this study is regarding the relationship between research and practice (Hammersley, 1992). Like the advocates of critical ethnography, I believe that the researcher should aim to improve development programmes and that

ethnography allows for a more holistic, flexible research approach. I see the relationship of the researcher and the research subjects as key to whether or not ethnography can prove useful or valid. Cameron et al (1992) describe how the researcher can adopt one of three possible "political" positions: ethics (research on), advocacy (research on and for) or empowerment (research on, for and with (the researched)). Though my own research began with the latter ideal, I realised gradually that the role of researcher and researched is not static and that the relationship cannot simply reflect the researcher's intentions. If research is to initiate useful change, the researcher needs to consider not just their relationship with "the researched" and how they represent them in text, but to explore the situations where the research is to be used. In my own case, this involved analysing planning practices and texts (for example, field report writing) in the agencies implementing the programmes I studied. The issue is not just around how to change ethnography to make it more action-oriented but how to develop a more dynamic model of planning and evaluation to enable planners to use the holistic view that ethnographic data can provide (Long, 1992a). The concept of *literacy practices* (like Long's "intervention practices") has thus broadened the scope of research such as mine, to include not only the social, cultural and political processes associated with literacy programmes (as an example of a specific intervention practice) but a consideration of the whole context into which such programmes are introduced (including existing literacy practices).

It is assumed that ethnography can contribute to practice through being a more flexible, holistic approach to studying social situations, whether classrooms or development projects. Some of the methods of presenting and analysing data associated with ethnography, such as case studies, are also felt to be more accessible to practitioners than statistical data associated with the traditional research paradigms. However, even in action-oriented ethnography, the researcher still owns and controls the research findings. Issues associated with traditional research - the power of researcher over the researched, the form of the text and the relationship of research to practice or policy - remain problematic, despite attempts to challenge the authority of the ethnographer through rhetorical devices such as using informants' own texts or words or basing the aims of the research around the subjects' concerns.

Because of these unresolved issues, I felt at the beginning of my study that ethnography as a methodology did not entirely meet my concerns as a researcher. I saw ethnography as a very slow intensive approach which was time-consuming for both researcher and researched: the academic tradition from which ethnography has developed imposed practical and methodological limitations. Even if the researcher had intentions of making the research action-oriented, there was little opportunity or tools to follow up on information obtained. My concern was also at the level of methods since ethnography has tended to retain the image of fieldwork being a mysterious initiation which you can only learn by doing. The reflexivity apparent in many ethnographic texts now is around the researcher's role and presentation of data, but less so around the methods used to collect that data. I believed at the beginning of my fieldwork, that the approach and methods of an alternative research paradigm, Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) would answer some of the dilemmas posed by ethnography around

representation and linking research to action. By using PRA and ethnography as complementary approaches, I intended to draw on the methods and philosophy of PRA while retaining some of the critical theoretical concepts of ethnography: the attempts to reflect social processes, recognition of the subjective role of the researcher and reflexivity around the text.

Participatory Rural Appraisal and ethnography : "incompatible approaches"[3]?

Rather than emerging from academic research, PRA began as a development planning methodology, described as an empowering process "in which people, and especially the weaker and the poorer are enabled to collate, present and analyse information" (Chambers, 1994b: 1267). Although PRA has gained enormous popularity with development practitioners, partly as a reaction to costly large-scale survey techniques, this particular participatory research approach has rarely been used for planning purposes in an educational context (exceptions being Sey, 1997; Archer, 1996; and Kane, 1995). In broad terms, PRA can be seen in the tradition of "action research" drawing on the ideas of PAR (Participatory Action-Research) in Freire (1970). The most direct source of PRA methods is rapid rural appraisal (RRA) which began in the late 1970s as a response to the "biased perceptions derived from rural development tourism and the many defects and high costs of large scale questionnaires" (Chambers, 1994b :1253).

Although I suggested that PRA could help meet some of the criticisms of ethnography cited above, the two approaches have tended to be seen in opposition - not least, because PRA grew out of dissatisfaction with conventional research approaches (including traditional ethnography). PRA and participant observation, a key method within ethnography, are considered to be "incompatible approaches" (Wright and Nelson, 1995: 43) in several respects: for example, the purpose of PRA is change whereas "this is variously denied or treated as an incidental outcome of participant research" (ibid.: 58). My own reasons for combining the two methodological approaches lay in my belief that academic research does not necessarily have to be research "on" but can become research "with" or even research "by" communities (Cameron, ibid.). However during the course of my fieldwork, I began to see the value of using PRA more at the level of methods than at that of methodology, mainly because of practical limitations resulting from my role as academic researcher.

PRA has been criticised on similar grounds to traditional ethnography where the researcher lacked reflexivity. The fact that subjects are themselves representing ideas, rather than the researcher writing them down, tends to lead to the assumption that the subjects have more 'voice' than in traditional research. Although within PRA, much attention is paid to the power relationship between outsiders and insiders in terms of interaction between communities

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[3] These words are quoted from Wright and Nelson's chapter, " Participatory research and participant observation: two incompatible approaches" (Nelson and Wright, 1995)

and planners, the actual techniques used in place of writing - many of which are based on visual literacy - are often presented as a neutral technology free from cultural bias (Robinson-Pant, 1996). PRA methodology has also been described as having an implicit gender bias, being public social events (Mosse 1993) and emphasising consensus above conflict (Kinden, 1993).

These criticisms of PRA, around the role of the facilitator and bias in methodology, could -I felt - be addressed through using an ethnographic approach to the PRA activities: the situation of people creating diagrams becomes a social process that can be documented through fieldnotes. PRA could be seen to complement an ethnographic approach to research: the visual methods of diagramming and representing ideas through symbols (e.g. maps and time lines) can break down barriers between researcher and the researched (Chambers, 1997: 135). The greater accessibility of research data to participants means that they can help determine the research agenda and the fieldwork become more action-oriented. Although the aim of PRA is to produce visual data that can be used in NGO planning of projects, my aim as an academic researcher was to use this data as part of my overall thesis which would be presented in the form of case studies. I thus acknowledged that the different literacy practices associated with ethnography (writing texts) and with PRA (drawing and modelling) would result in different products, reflecting the contrasting research aims and audiences.

The second half of this chapter describes in detail the process of setting up, carrying out fieldwork, analysis and writing of this study: an ethnography of the ethnography. The complexities in my role as researcher and in the situations I studied show that polarised descriptions such as insider/outsider or artificial/natural situations can be misleading and simplistic. The issues of reflexivity, the relationship of text to research process and how or when research can influence practice, have remained problematic and were not *solved* by my fieldwork practice or writing this text. The aim of this book is to challenge the popular static model of planning, policy and research that has been associated with women's literacy: to explore how the link between literacy and development has been constructed. A reflexive stance towards one's own research process can lead to greater understanding around what points and in what ways ethnographic research can influence policy and practice in literacy programmes.

An Ethnography of the Ethnography: reading between the lines

Outside this chapter, there is a tendency for data to be presented as objective facts, for myself to disappear into the role of the omnipotent researcher and for research methods to become invisible. Here I describe therefore the implications of my various roles and different research methods for the material presented in the book as "case studies" and provide clues as to how these methodological issues are indicated within each chapter.

(a) Entering the research process

My choice of methodology was influenced by debates about how far ethnography could explore and reflect social processes and how PRA could lead more directly into practice. My methodological stance could therefore also be traced to my ideas about literacy and development as social processes to be documented in a fuller way than conventional evaluations that attempt to measure outputs. This theoretical position and my initial interest in the link between women's literacy and development arise not just from my academic background however, but primarily from my former work experiences in Nepal.

As a British Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) volunteer, I worked from 1985 to '87 in the remote districts of the Far Western region, training facilitators for adult literacy and out-of-school girls' literacy programmes on the UNESCO/ Government of Nepal-funded Seti Project. My role as trainer included writing literacy materials, planning and evaluation of what were termed "functional literacy" programmes. Working very closely with local communities, I soon began to suspect that the reasons why women went to literacy classes were very different from the planners' perspective. In particular, I questioned the dominant practice (which I was also involved in) whereby literacy programmes were a vehicle for conveying development messages from the Government or NGOs (Robinson, 1987). Although methods of communication, the development messages and literacy materials have changed, this overall trend has intensified over the years in Nepal. Since my days as a grassroots literacy trainer, I have been working at planning and policy level: first with ActionAid where I was involved with formulating and monitoring plans for an integrated rural development programme (including literacy); then with VSO where as field officer, my role was to negotiate with the Education Ministry for jobs and to support volunteers as literacy trainers in the nation-wide Basic and Primary Education Programme. More recently, I worked in a consultant's capacity on a DfID-funded community literacy programme: this role included holding interviews with NGOs at central level and producing an overview of literacy programmes in Nepal. In all these planning and support roles, I have gained a more complex understanding of the policy/planning/ implementation process (including the kind of research undertaken) and the conflict of interests between head offices (usually in the North) and local projects. The desire to link these contrasting perspectives on literacy and development, through a piece of ethnographic research, was another aim behind this book.

The various roles that I have played and the knowledge that I gained through working in Nepal have thus influenced the shape of this text. My interest in looking at literacy programmes from the differing perspectives of planners, implementers and participants comes partly from the frustrations of only being involved at one level at any one time. I saw my new role as academic researcher as an unusual opportunity to observe the "battles over images and meaning that takes place at the interface between outsiders and local groups" (Villareal, 1992: 264) - in which I too had been an active player. Having previously been involved in 'development', entering a different academic discourse has also given me an opportunity to look from a distance at current development and literacy ideologies. In a sense, this more distant perspective may

have brought me closer to how local communities view a development agency that arrives in their village with a literacy programme.

Though I have played differing roles in Nepal (planner, evaluator, trainer, consultant, writer), the role of academic field researcher was completely new to me and I was aware when setting up my field research of having to adopt a new persona, though also drawing on many of my previous roles. Thus my first step in the research process was not just to explore how my previous ideas fitted into theoretical models of gender, literacy and planning, but to decide the kind of role that I intended to play as researcher. I was aware of the need to negotiate and present this new role to ex-colleagues who knew me primarily as trainer or planner and who are now the key literacy players at central level.

(b) Identifying the case studies : putting theory into practice

Although my theoretical stance on literacy and development influenced my choice of methodology, I became more and more aware that practical issues were equally important in shaping the research strategy. My first step was to identify two case studies on which to focus for the eight months field research. My intention was not to suggest that my findings would necessarily be generalisable to other literacy programmes in Nepal or elsewhere, nor that these programmes were representative of a majority. Within the programmes I selected, I also do not suggest that the classes I focused on (or the individuals described) were typical of the programme as a whole: my choice of case studies was based on which would fulfil the criteria of a "telling" rather than a "typical" case (Mitchell, ibid.). In particular, because I wanted to focus on the link between the *kind of literacy* and the *kind of development* in each programme, I began by looking for programmes with contrasting objectives and approaches to literacy teaching. This proved more difficult than I had anticipated: the NGOs and government tend to state their objectives as "functional", "empowering" or "consciousness-raising" but such terms do not necessarily give an indication of the kind of literacy or development practices being promoted. Though I widened my definition of approaches to try and find a *traditional* approach to literacy as opposed to *radical*, it was extremely difficult to find any programmes that did not follow the government basic literacy course, **Naya Goreto** (meaning "A New Trail", see Chapter 3). As well as looking at the approach to literacy teaching, I took into account factors such as organisational structure (whether run by Government, local or international NGO), scale (national or specific to a group of people), level of resources, target group (mixed or women-only) and language of instruction (whether in Nepali, the national language, or minority mother tongues). My selection was also based on an awareness of issues around ethnic group, geographical location (including the degree of urbanisation) and caste. I intended to concentrate on a programme that had been working in the same area for a number of years, with the aim of contacting past participants.

I decided to select my case study programmes only after reaching Nepal in September 1995. Although I already had a good idea of the range of programmes and their objectives, I was

also aware of the rapidly changing literacy scene and that within the duration of a few months, staff and objectives of programmes can be transformed. The fragility of the recently elected Communist Government (November 1994) meant that key personnel of all the government-supported programmes at central and district level could be transferred overnight. Similarly, the local NGOs in particular often rely on one charismatic leader for their direction, so are vulnerable if this person goes abroad for training or leaves the organisation. Although I wanted to ensure a wide choice of programmes, I could not possibly contact all the NGOs currently running literacy classes[4] and I was aware that both NGO and government classes sometimes exist on paper, though not in reality. Whilst in the UK, I contacted by letter fourteen NGOs who seemed to have a distinctive approach to literacy, explaining the main aim of my research and asking whether they would be interested for me to stay in their project area. All the organisations replied positively but varied in their degree of enthusiasm and how far they agreed with my research strategy. I thus narrowed down the field a little and worked out whom I could meet on arrival in Kathmandu.

I eventually decided to focus on HIL (Health Is Life), a local NGO based near Kathmandu, and Save the Children USA, an international NGO working in a more remote Western district of Nepal (see map). My role as an external researcher differed greatly according to the organisation concerned. HIL saw my research as a potentially useful tool for evaluation and increasing the profile of literacy within the wider health programme, whereas within Save, I was just one of many researchers looking at their literacy programme. How the organisations perceived my role affected my research strategy and how far the field research could lead directly into action. The "meaning" that PRA already held within the organisations also determined how my research methods evolved in practice.

HIL

HIL (Health Is Life) had developed out of the NGO called SPACE (Society for Participatory and Cultural Education) - the most enthusiastic respondent to my initial letter of enquiry. SPACE were one of the few local NGOs whom I knew from previous contact had a more radical Freirean approach to literacy teaching. Their programme started over ten years ago and used a key word approach to literacy to initiate social action. They now work in several areas of Nepal with various disadvantaged groups: in Sindhuli, 90% of the target population turned out to be in debt so the literacy course turned into an "Indebtedness Alleviation Campaign" involving action against local money lenders.

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[4] According to Shrestha (1993), in 92/93, 136 NGOs were providing 51% of Nepal's adult literacy classes (the remainder were provided by Government) and as the number of NGOs grows annually, the figure is now much higher.

When I met with the SPACE director, it was clear that they were unusual in developing their own curriculum and seeing literacy as a way of raising consciousness about social and political as well as development issues. However when we came to discuss which project I could base myself with, I realised that all the current classes were running in areas where SPACE had only just started working. This meant I would have to travel to a different area to meet with past participants. Like most local NGOs, SPACE has little written documentation of their programme, so it was only through informal discussion with friends in another NGO that I discovered their original programme was in fact still running, but under a different name. This literacy programme had been set up over ten years ago in Lalitpur, an area just outside Kathmandu, and though SPACE is no longer directly involved, most of the original staff still work as trainers and supervisors.

HIL, as the programme is now called, thus seemed to be pioneering a "radical" approach to literacy and they still produced their own literacy materials rather than relying on the Government primer **Naya Goreto**. As the new name suggests, the literacy group have become attached to an NGO working in community health : the literacy classes are intended to be the entry point into health education for women. HIL had a centralised hierarchical structure in which doctors at their Model Hospital in Kathmandu decided policy for the local health projects, including the literacy component. As I came into direct contact with the literacy staff via SPACE, I did not even meet the doctors at headquarters until much later in my stay. Although I had a well-defined relationship with the literacy staff (they insisted on discussing my role in depth and what kind of feedback I could give), their relationship with central office determined how they used my reports within HIL as a whole.

The HIL trainers had been running literacy classes for over ten years in Lalitpur but had changed the project's name several times to reflect the current source of funding. Though their present link was with a health project run by doctors in Kathmandu and thus more around functional literacy as an entry point to health education, the literacy component had developed from a radical Freirean approach pioneered in the '70s by underground Communist activists. The group of trainers still produced their own materials for the 14 classes run for young women in settlements just outside Kathmandu. My main worry about choosing HIL as a case study was the practical constraint that I did not speak the local language, Newari. Most of the women attending classes are Newari caste and hardly speak Nepali. Although I could communicate with the staff and facilitators in Nepali, I realised I would have to be dependent on Newari translators when talking with the women participants. The NGO's policy was to use Nepali in literacy classes, but most spoken interaction between women participants and the facilitator went on in Newari. The language barrier certainly affected both my role (which became more formalised than I would have wished) and my methods as researcher as I relied more on PRA and other visual methods.

Save the Children USA (Arughat/ Arutar)

The choice of my other case study was equally difficult as so many NGOs seemed to be running almost identical programmes. Having decided to choose an NGO using the Government **Naya Goreto** functional literacy course, I then had the same problem as with SPACE of trying to find a programme that had been running in the same area for some time.

Before I met with the Save USA Programme Director, in contrast with HIL, I had had the opportunity to read detailed documentation of Save programmes in Nepal. Not only did staff write regular reports on literacy classes and training but had conducted research into key issues, like mother tongue teaching and caste discrimination within the programme. Although this made it easier for me to gather background information, I was reluctant to work in an area where several researchers had already conducted evaluation studies, such as Save's earliest programme in Gorkha. The Programme Director therefore suggested basing myself in an area called Arughat, a day's walk from Gorkha (which is a five hour bus journey from Kathmandu).

I chose Save USA (known as "Save") as the other case study because they have worked in Gorkha, Western Nepal, for over ten years (this is unusual as NGOs shift area each year to try to make as much of the population "literate"). As well as using the government course ***Naya Goreto,*** they have experimented with different literacy approaches such as Learner Generated Materials. Since literacy classes were run as just one component of a larger rural development programme, there was also the opportunity to explore how the kind of literacy promoted in classes related to their women's development activities. Though I had decided to concentrate on Arughat, I did not realise until I reached there that most of the classes were running in Thumi, an area a further six hours walk away! As I was accompanied by my four year old son, it was impossible to base ourselves so far from the roadhead, so we ended up in a village called Arutar (half an hour from Arughat) where only one advanced literacy class was running. The fact that most of my observation took place in the Arutar class for these purely practical reasons means that I do not intend my findings to be taken as "typical" of Save nor necessarily generalisable to the programme as a whole. Living for long periods of time with a local family in this small village did however have great advantages, in that I was able to draw more on ethnographic observation (partly too because I spoke their language, Nepali) and had a much closer relationship with participants than in Lalitpur (HIL's area).

The following tables highlight some of the contrasts between my two case studies, in terms of their literacy programmes and organisation, and between the two geographical areas concerned:

Table 1 : Profile of case study NGO literacy programmes

HIL	SAVE USA
Local NGO with head office in Kathmandu (established in 1991)	International NGO with head office in the USA
Started as a SPACE programme in 1983: SPACE moved out of this area in 1989	Started in 1981 in Gorkha district, 1991 in Arughat
Apart from literacy materials and funding proposals, little written documentation in form of evaluations, history or reports	Many reports on various aspects of the literacy programme, evaluations, training manuals and even English translations of course materials
Working in literacy and health	Literacy as an entry point to other sectoral activities, especially income generation
Running 14 classes (9 basic, 5 advanced) in areas near Kathmandu: 2 classes involved a 5 hour walk from the road	NFE programme running in 8 districts of Nepal (376 basic literacy classes, 323 advanced literacy classes in 95/96)
Staff recruited from local area	Sectoral staff recruited from central level, except for literacy facilitators who are local
Literacy materials: prepared locally each week on gestetner by trainers around health issues and mathematics	Literacy materials : government **Naya Goreto** for basic course and **Kosalee** produced by Save centrally for advanced course
Course: basic level, 6 months (Nepali and maths), advanced level, 6 months (Nepali, English and maths)	Course: basic level and advanced levels both for 6 months (Nepali and maths), third year vocational literacy course (includes practical activities like vegetable growing)

Table 2: Description of case study areas and population of literacy classes

Lalitpur (HIL)	**Arutar (Save USA)**
Situated 10 km. from Kathmandu, accessible by bus	Situated in the West of Nepal: a five hour bus ride from Kathmandu to Gorkha, then eight hours walk to Arughat
Landscape dominated by brick factories, many small carpet weaving centres and shops in the settlements: some agriculture (vegetables for sale in Kathmandu and rice for subsistence).	Terraced fields with large irrigation scheme in Arutar. Subsistence agriculture: rice, some corn and wheat
Predominantly Newari caste	Mixed caste, though literacy class is mostly Majhi (fishing caste)
Mother tongue: nearly all Newari (except two classes in Tamang speaking area)	Mother tongue: Nepali (also Gurung and Newari spoken in this area, but not by members of literacy class)
Women participants' occupations: carpet weaving (unmarried girls), straw mat weaving (married women), agriculture, shop keeping, cloth weaving	Women participants' occupations: subsistence agriculture, daily labour in Arughat bazaar (house-building, carrying stones)
Husbands'/ brothers' occupations: agriculture, carpentry, masonry, shop keeping, office work in Kathmandu	Husbands' occupations: subsistence agriculture, labouring, fishing, portering

Case studies within the case studies: present and past class participants

Although I had intended to study intensively one class within each programme, I had not envisaged the social pressures from both the organisations and the facilitators to spread myself more widely. The HIL facilitators in particular were insistent I should observe all 14 classes in the first two weeks: I ended up observing five of these classes on a regular basis, partly so that I would not have to rely on just one facilitator for help with translation. My decision could be related to Ball's (1993: 34) discussion of access versus entry: though I was granted formal *entry* by the HIL literacy team, I would not necessarily have gained *access*, the co-operation of facilitators, supervisors and women participants, if I had persevered with my initial aim of studying only one class.

Within each project area, I had also intended to focus on case studies of individual women attending classes and those who had attended at a particular time in the past. Although both HIL and Save had been working in the same area for several years, it did not prove easy to contact women formerly attending classes since after marriage, they move to their husbands' home (often in a different district). After Save staff called a former participant to meet me at the office, I decided to concentrate on the present participants whom I could meet informally:

> *I don't feel I am going about things in the right way - e.g. I asked ... where I could find people from a class that was running five years ago and now they are 'bringing' me ...(a) woman from a nearby village, like a specimen...*
>
> *Fieldnotes: 11/10/95, Arughat*

Eventually I found out, almost by accident, that many of the women with whom I mixed on a daily basis - including the mother of the family where I stayed in Arutar - had formerly participated in literacy classes. I thus ended up talking to former participants on an ad hoc basis rather than tracing a group of women from one particular class. Particularly in relation to gender issues, I realised only later that I could learn more from the women with whom I lived in Arutar, than from the participants of the literacy class, as I had hoped. I had not until then thought of my immediate neighbours as "case studies" and had been busily collecting data at the other end of the village (the Majhis who attended the class).

At the beginning of fieldwork, I had such a rigid idea of who should be my case studies that I failed to see the significance of events around me:

> *I feel this event* [forestry committee meeting described in Chapter 4] *has made me see things very differently - I suddenly realised I hadn't even explored what is going on around where I live, but have been rushing off to Majhigow each day to discuss with women there. I hadn't even realised until now that there was a women's group in our street... or that the women feel so strongly about their exclusion from village decision making.*
>
> *Fieldnotes: 13/1/96, Arutar*

The areas where HIL and Save work are very different socially and geographically (as shown in Table 2) and these factors influenced which classes I chose as case studies. Within the Lalitpur area, I chose five classes near the road from Kathmandu, in Sanagow and Changanathali. I was then able to cycle or travel by bus from my base in Kathmandu for daytime visits, but after observing classes I had to sleep at facilitators' homes as there was no public transport after dark. Literacy classes in both Lalitpur and Arutar were held at about 8 p.m., when the women had finished their domestic duties. At one point, I did try renting a room in Sanagow, a small town where three classes were being held, with the intention of building up a closer relationship with participants. The HIL staff had warned me against this - they preferred to commute rather than to stay in the area because of poor hygiene conditions. I managed to rent a room in the sole house with a latrine but my son and I only survived a week before falling ill: although there was piped water in the road, the family with whom we ate would still use stagnant water from a hole in the garden, even for cooking purposes. The experience was useful for understanding community resistance to health education ideas being disseminated by HIL, and even within the week I built up a closer relationship with facilitators and participants as a 'resident' rather than nightly visitor. In Arutar, I stayed with a Newari family about 15 minutes walk from the class : at night, everyone insisted that it was unsafe to walk alone because of "man-eating tigers". This meant I always had to find an escort to accompany me to the class (usually the teenage children from the street where I lived). During the last few months of my field work, the political situation in Arutar became very tense and I was advised, as the only foreigner, to leave the area (Save office staff were being physically attacked as representatives of the US by local Maoist groups). Consequently, I spent more time in Kathmandu towards the end of fieldwork, analysing and doing further work with HIL. Practical constraints such as I have described above thus greatly influenced my research strategy.

(c) The fieldwork process : developing methods and approaches

Before I arrived in the fieldwork sites, I felt that I had a defined research strategy that, through combining an ethnographic approach with PRA, would enable me to make my research more action-oriented and relevant to the people with whom I was working. I intended to observe a literacy class on a regular basis, visit participants in their homes, interview staff from the NGOs and trace participants from classes several years back to discuss their views of the programmes

now. I hoped to use some visual methods drawn from PRA as the basis for informal interviews and focus group discussions. Although I had recognised the need to discuss with the agencies concerned how they would like to use my findings in their own work, I had not however realised how my own research methods and role would be affected by their previous experiences and expectations of research. At the time, I reflected on this aspect of the research process under the heading, *Who is directing the research - me or the project? Fieldnotes: 6/11/95*:

My entry into HIL was not as straightforward as with Save, where I simply made contact with the central office who directed me to Arughat. HIL, as a small NGO, were concerned to discuss in detail my role and how they could benefit from the research. The literacy staff arranged a meeting of all their trainers and facilitators to discuss my proposal : it soon emerged that they felt I could carry out an evaluation of the whole programme (which they had never been able to afford) and, on seeing the words PRA in my proposal, they were keen for me to give PRA training. I explained that my approach would be to study the programme in more depth on a smaller scale, but I ended up with a compromise where I visited all 14 classes at least once. I also gave a training session on PRA, which to my surprise was attended by HIL doctors and even the store-keeper from Kathmandu, rather than all the literacy facilitators as I had assumed. I soon realised that PRA was considered a marketable resource which they could gain access to.

Save USA, by contrast, had had many researchers and evaluators passing through the project areas and at the beginning, few people questioned my role or what I could contribute to the organisation. When I wrote my first field report, staff seemed surprised that I had given any feedback on the programme. In Arughat, I was treated as a staff member, invited to stay in their office accommodation and I spent the first week observing training programmes, helping staff write reports in English (for the central office) and visiting the classes further afield. The Save staff also assumed that I should try and cover as much of the programme as possible and meet with all the class participants as a group to "ask my questions". I felt rather uneasy adopting this role at the beginning: not least because the local people then viewed me as a member of Save office. Once I decided to concentrate on the Arutar class, it made sense to move up to the village and rent a room with a local family. The local staff became more curious about my motives: they, like the villagers, were not sure why I would want to live in the village with my son rather than in the office staff quarters.

My first field experiences were thus around learning what expectations local staff and literacy participants had of me as a researcher. I was very aware of establishing my role in the local areas and that I had to adapt my research strategy in response to the particular social situations. I had imagined that I would use the same research methods in both HIL and Save areas and at first I felt frustrated that what 'worked' in Arughat did not 'work' in Lalitpur: I must be doing something wrong as researcher. However, as time went on, I began to see that the roles I had adopted (partly in response to the participants' and organisation's expectations) in the two areas and the very different social situations influenced how I could collect data. The difference between the two field work sites in particular determined how appropriate and how successful PRA was as a research approach.

I had assumed that PRA visual methods would be new and exciting for both the project staff and women participants but in fact, PRA as a development planning strategy was already widely used in both the areas where I worked. Rather than a neutral tool, I discovered that PRA had already been inscribed with local meanings, become institutionalised in ways unknown to me by the various organisations working in Lalitpur and Arughat. The term "PRA" was a problem in itself: everyone had heard of it and attached their own meaning. Whilst using the word PRA opened doors for me wherever I went, I became more cautious about the different meanings it has for different groups of people, preferring to refer to my research approach as "drawing pictures" or simply "chalphal" (discussion).

HIL told me as soon as I arrived, that their approach to literacy was based on PRA. The project artist was asked to fetch "the PRA" from the cupboard. He produced a beautifully drawn map of a village where they worked and the team explained to me that this was a PRA exercise to establish which houses had women eligible to go to the literacy class. The artist had drawn the map based on information from the households. They then brought out a huge file of papers labelled "Preference Ranking". Dense tables showing which vegetable seeds were preferred and which diseases were most common amongst the community, had been drawn up by each literacy class facilitator. They had then collated the results from all the classes to find an overall popular vegetable and disease. The team explained that they had tried to get the women participants to fill in the numbers, but their writing was not that good yet. I asked what they used the information for and they replied that they could then choose the key words which become the basis for the literacy lessons. For example, one reading passage was about pneumonia as it had been ranked the most common illness.

Through this initial orientation, I thus learnt some of the meanings PRA held for HIL staff: PRA activities were associated with planning the literacy curriculum rather than collecting data about the programme, as I intended to do. There was also a greater emphasis on the product, the visual *text* such as maps or charts of results, than on the process of discussion around the activity. Later, when I came to facilitate PRA activities in literacy classes, I found the literacy facilitators wanted to "teach" the participants to draw maps using proper symbols and correctly spelt words : they were not interested in stimulating discussion of the issues emerging, but in completing the PRA activity to get a good finished product. As I indicate through footnotes in Chapter 6, I did succeed in using PRA for discussion, but only by using methods with which the facilitators were **not** familiar, such as mobility mapping and time lines.

I also found that once maps were completed (using felt pens and paper), there was more lively discussion through using seeds and grains to indicate on the map, for example, which households had girls going to school and to discuss the reasons why.

Save had also used PRA techniques, not within the classroom, but for identifying who should be the target group for their programme activities. The staff had received PRA orientation from external trainers and explained to me how they used wealth ranking to decide which section of each community were the "poorest of the poor". A field worker told me that they did this over a large geographical area by selecting a group of "key people" in each village who would vote (with stones) to show project staff who was the poorest. This group of poor would then become the focus of the project activities, receiving literacy classes, income generation training and encouragement to form savings and credit groups. The "poorest of the poor" group in Arutar, the Majhi caste who attended the literacy class, seemed unaware of this whole wealth ranking process as the women said they had not been represented among the "key people". As I observed meetings with local communities, I was struck by how useful PRA could have been as a facilitation tool to encourage real discussion, but as in HIL, there was more emphasis on the product - the survey of who was poorest - than a two way process of dialogue between staff and community. Although I could facilitate a different kind of PRA for my own research purposes, I was not in a position to question the staff's existing PRA approach, given my lack of status as an outside researcher and their time constraints.

I ended up using PRA to a greater extent in HIL's project area largely because of the language barrier : visual activities enabled me to have more direct communication with the women at classes. Although I could not follow the discussion going on during the activity, I could at least ask questions through the facilitator about the visuals that were drawn. The women in Lalitpur area were less welcoming and open to me as an outsider, having become used to foreign language students and anthropologists staying in the area, and the PRA activities provided a kind of formal entry point into conversation. This was in contrast with Arutar where I had no problems initiating conversation - partly because the women were anxious to find out more about me (and my son), but also because I could speak their language. In this context, I felt that PRA activities formalised our relationship in a way that interrupted the informal unstructured interaction that we had every day.

There were also practical reasons why I found PRA was not appropriate in Arutar. During the daytime, I never found women free to spend time on my research activities - a great asset of the ethnographic approach was that we could sit and chat even if the woman was busy cooking, weeding or winnowing rice. The only time I could have facilitated PRA with a group was at night when the women attended the literacy class. However, unlike HIL facilitators, the Arutar facilitator was reluctant to interrupt the literacy course to spend time on extra-curricular activities and the classroom was a difficult venue for participatory activities, with rows of heavy wooden desks fixed to the floor and no room to move around. I did once conduct a time line activity with a group of Majhi women (in the daytime) where they used household objects to represent how they spent their day. The activity 'worked' but left me feeling that I had learnt

nothing new. Living with a family in the village for eight months, I had learnt so much through everyday conversation about relationships within the community, people's hopes and fears and what they felt about the literacy programme. The PRA activity seemed to produce more superficial findings, a snapshot of a moment, rather than the more complex interactions that I heard and participated in on a daily basis. The fact that I spoke Nepali made facilitating PRA activities more frustrating than in Lalitpur. As a lone researcher, I was unable to facilitate and simultaneously record the process, which for me was more interesting than the maps produced.

In Lalitpur (HIL) and Arutar (Save), I thus ended up using PRA and ethnography to a differing extent. Partly because of the success of the more formalised PRA activities, I also used a brief questionnaire to collect basic factual information about the participants, their families and occupations in the HIL Lalitpur classes. I found this provided an excuse to meet everyone in the class (the facilitators had been reluctant until then to introduce me to drop-outs). Through the questionnaire, I discovered several women who now attended classes had ten years ago attended the original SPACE classes - so they were the "ex-participants" I had hoped to trace! Throughout the eight month period, I regularly observed literacy classes in the two areas. At first, I viewed this in similar terms to educational evaluation, aiming to analyse teaching methods and approaches used and how the participants responded to the curriculum. However, my observation of classes also provided insights similar to the PRA activities, in that I could document how women responded and discussed stories or pictures in the literacy course (usually this was informal interaction rather than "class discussion"). Unlike the PRA activities which I facilitated myself, as classroom observer I was free to take notes (the women did not find it strange that I wrote continually in a literacy class) while the teacher facilitated the lesson.

My role in the organisations: field research turning into action

My main interest in using PRA was originally to make my ethnographic research more action-oriented. However, I now consider that the "action" part of my research was not linked to the PRA activities. Whereas I had hoped that the making of maps and diagrams would enable literacy participants to have a greater input into project planning, the project staff were not in a position to help follow up the activities (partly because of the hierarchical structure of both organisations). When I realised this, I tried to find ways in which I could present views gained from the literacy class through the existing project structures. I wrote detailed accounts of the group meetings and interactions in the form of "field reports" for Save. Gradually I became a way of transmitting feelings from the participants/target community to the central office, since the project staff were usually just passing through the village in their attempt to cover the whole district. Whereas at the beginning of my stay, staff had questioned why I wanted to stay in Arutar, by the end, several people told me they wished they could also have the chance to work intensively in one area.

The action that I was involved in at Save was therefore not so much at the community level as I had originally envisaged, but in linking the field programme to the planning processes

at the central office. I was asked to contribute to gender training of field staff and gave continual feedback to central level staff on how the literacy course was working in practice. I could also no longer simply observe the Arutar literacy class : both the facilitator and women participants insisted that I should also teach and give ongoing support, so I became regarded more as a trainer than as researcher. My role of passing information between the community and Save and between Save Arughat and Kathmandu offices was not unproblematic: by the end, several of the lower level Arughat staff were trying to influence me to write on certain issues (such as caste discrimination in the organisation) in my regular field reports to the central office. They were aware that, unlike their own reports,

> *"now (indicating me and my notebook), this report will reach England, America, Kathmandu, even our director will read it..."*
>
> *Fieldnotes: 29/2/96, Arutar*
> *(Save staff member speaking to women's group)*

Within HIL, although I had had more initial discussion about how my research was to be used, tensions between the literacy team and the head office meant that my reports could serve either to support or undermine the literacy team's position in the organisation as a whole. I therefore tried to keep a lower profile, giving oral rather than written feedback and to the facilitators rather than to the people running the programme. Half-way through the literacy course, HIL central office decided to withdraw funding, meaning that the facilitators were no longer paid, there were no new materials and that the class participants had to pay the rent for the classrooms. I had not expected to play the role of fund-raiser, but it became clear that my most useful contribution would be to help the facilitators find alternative funding. We succeeded in getting a small grant from a British aid agency to run the classes for a further six months.

In both HIL and Save, I therefore ended up initiating some kind of "action" outside the academic research, though it was more limited than I had envisaged and did not involve the women participants as prime actors, as I had hoped through using PRA. Going into the project areas as a lone academic researcher, I felt constrained in what I could achieve through PRA. There were clear boundaries to my involvement, having invited myself to the projects rather than being called there like a consultant. Once I realised I could not follow through the whole PRA process, I looked closely at other ways in which I could initiate change. Rather than the ideal of "emancipatory action research", my research was closer to the "process consultancy

role" that Kemmis describes (1993: 187). In terms of Cameron's definition of the researcher's role, I would describe myself as having carried out fieldwork with the aim of "advocacy", *research on and for* - rather than "empowerment", *research on, for and with*. My role as researcher was not static or predictable (Harvey, 1992) - at times, I seemed to be controlled by project staff, largely because of my perceived power as an outside researcher. Regarding the overall research strategy, I did not consider PRA and ethnography to be "incompatible approaches", but it was a question of determining the strengths or constraints on using each approach in the specific setting.

Conclusion

My choice of ethnography as a research approach was made on a methodological level, reflecting my theoretical standpoint on literacy and development, rather than a technical consideration of methods. However, practical constraints (such as my lack of status as an external researcher within Save USA or my inability to speak Newari within HIL) affected which research methods I used and whether, for example, PRA visual activities belonged to the methodological approach that I intended. In other words, the philosophical and the technical levels cannot be so easily separated. The methodology reflects not only the researcher's ideological stance (e.g. that PRA can become more action-oriented research) but pragmatic considerations such as how much time participants and researcher have at their disposal. As my own fieldwork showed, it is not a matter of considering in a vacuum whether PRA and participant observation are "incompatible approaches" (Wright and Nelson, 1995), but under what social circumstances they could be combined.

This chapter has explored the many roles that I adopted in the course of the research. Unlike the traditional dichotomy of outsider/insider roles in relation to research, I have been aware of my constantly changing role, which in turn affected the role of the researched in my project. My relationship as researcher with researched was not necessarily a hierarchical one (Harvey, 1992), and the women in classes, community members and NGO staff also caused me to adopt new unexpected roles, such as politician or fund-raiser. Although my choice of methodology had been based around an assumption that I could carry out "empowering" research (Cameron, ibid.), my objectives changed during the course of fieldwork to acknowledge that because of my status and purpose as academic researcher, even to work at the "advocacy" level within the NGOs concerned would be an achievement.

The tensions I described within the fieldwork process are also reflected in the text. The distinction between "ethnographic experiences" and "ethnography" (Street, 1999) suggests there is a fundamental contradiction between the demands of fieldwork, to be reflexive about the many varied roles and situations participated in, and the demands of writing: to produce a well-argued, cohesive text. The aim of many academic texts has been to make the author invisible, to disguise the methodological tensions and contradictions that in the field are taken as

challenges and as part of the research strategy. I have tried however to make my influence on the text, as well as on the fieldwork process, more explicit through selection of extracts from my fieldnotes and indicating in the text how I collected the data analysed. This chapter should give an insight into the social processes involved in producing this book and provide an entry point that will help the reader towards a critical reading of the text.

CHAPTER THREE

Young women learn to read a song about flies spreading disease:
at a literacy class in Sanagow

CHAPTER THREE

LITERACY FOR WOMEN : THEORY FOR WHOM AND BY WHOM?

Introduction

My intention in this book is to suggest that participants and facilitators hold theories and models of literacy which influence how programmes are implemented in practice. This dimension is left out in accounts which work from a top-down model of planning, viewing participants as passive recipients of literacy classes and facilitators as following the orders of planners. Such accounts, which tend to use quantitative methods to measure literacy success or outcomes, often assume that participants should hold the same ideas about literacy as the planners and that, for example, drop out from classes is due to lack of motivation rather than a differing ideology. These texts share a "productionist notion of education" (Carter, 1996: 17), belonging to a modernisation discourse of development. In the context of women's literacy programmes, much of the existing literature thus tries to identify "barriers" or constraints to women learning, rather than to analyse how women themselves view literacy. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 will therefore concentrate on the perspectives of the class participants with a view to understanding their models of literacy in relation to those of planners and researchers outlined in this chapter. In the final chapter, these different perspectives will be brought together in order to analyse the implications for planning of literacy programmes for women.

Literacy for women requires a theoretical framework which takes into account how needs and perceptions of literacy vary according to gender. This assumption follows from the idea above that participants also hold an ideology of literacy which influences how they "take hold" of programmes (Kulick and Stroud, ibid.). Attempts to look at how models of literacy vary according to gender should also take into account other axes of difference, such as age and caste. My analysis will thus move away from a concentration on *programmes* to include the wider context of how literacy is used in daily life and the "meanings" of literacy (Rockhill, 1993b). The following section introduces the theoretical models used by researchers and planners as a necessary prelude to analysing how women participants themselves viewed literacy, education and development.

The Researcher : models of literacy

In the 1960s, Goody claimed that literacy could be the main factor distinguishing primitive from civilised societies. His ideas came to be characterised by the "Great Divide" (Goody, 1968) between literate and oral societies, voicing many common assumptions about literacy as a neutral technology independent of the social or political context. Literacy was believed to have cognitive implications for the individual, enabling more complex abstract thought than was possible in oral societies.

Critics of what has come to be known as the "autonomous" view of literacy (Street, 1993) have suggested that this "divide" between orality and literacy could actually be seen as a continuum. Rather than believing in a single (presumably Western) literacy, they point out the existence of multiple literacies in the local context. Literacy cannot be "acquired neutrally but in specific cultural, political and historical contexts" (Mackie, 1980 : 1). An understanding of literacy therefore depends on an exploration of the social context to see what functions writing has and how far the assumed "effects of literacy" are actually the effects "of the people who... organise literacy programmes" (Oxenham, 1980: 51). From the belief that literacy practices are "aspects not only of 'culture' but of power structures" (Roberts and Street, 1995), an ideological approach to researching literacy has been developed. For example, Street discusses "colonial" literacy, using the term "dominant literacy" to describe situations where a "dominant group within a society .. is responsible for spreading literacy to other members of that society" (Street, 1987: 50). When literacy is transferred from another culture, as is the case in many Western sponsored literacy programmes, "those receiving it will be more conscious of the nature and power of that culture than of the mere technical aspects of reading and writing. Very often this process has involved some transfer of 'Western' values to a Third World society" (ibid.).

Chapter 1 illustrated how the "autonomous" model of literacy "pervaded the demographic literature on education and fertility" (Carter, 1996: 33) and more generally, research on women's literacy and development. From a focus on "barriers" to women's participation in literacy programmes (Mace, 1992), there has more recently been a shift to recognising the political implications of introducing a certain kind of literacy to women, an oppressed group (Lind, 1989, Stromquist, 1990). By questioning the assumptions of earlier research, such as whether women constitute a homogeneous group with similar needs and whether their literacy practices are different from men's, researchers have developed new analytical tools. For example, from her research in Los Angeles, Rockhill (1993a) discusses how literacy practices can be "gendered": though women do a lot of the written work associated with the household, they are labelled "illiterate" compared with their husbands who tend to use literacy skills in the public domain.

Within research models, a clear distinction emerges between those that concentrate on women's literacy (based on the autonomous model and characterised by an attention to "barriers", looking only at literacy in the adult class context) and those that look more widely at gender and literacy practices. The latter approach draws on concepts from the New Literacy Studies, such as multiple literacies, domains of use and literacy practices to consider the broader

social, political and cultural context of a literacy programme. Within this ideological approach, literacy is no longer conflated with education, but the literacy class can be analysed using theory drawn from the school context around educational systems reproducing or changing gender relations. The reproduction/transformation model does however need to be adapted in the context of women's literacy to take into account the varied ages of participants and the fact that the literacy class, though not part of a formal educational system, may be only one component of a larger development programme which also influences gender relations. Feminist writers have deepened understanding of "ideology" in literacy programmes, providing such theoretical concepts as "multiple constructions of gender" and "mu.tiple forms of oppression" for analysing how and whom literacy programmes aim to empower (Street, 1992). It is therefore important to understand the cultural constructions of gender and the implications of Western researchers applying certain theoretical models to developing country contexts.

The Planner : approaches to literacy teaching in developing countries

Applying the autonomous and ideological models of literacy to analyse the kind of literacy programmes promoted in developing countries over the past fifty years enables us to analyse the relationship between planners and participants, rather than simply to describe the planners' methods. Rogers (1994a) summarises the assumptions of literacy planners as:

(i) the traditional view which "is founded on a deficit view of illiteracy, on the belief that autonomous learning and development activities can start only after the acquisition of literacy" (Rogers, 1994b : 46). This would include the 'Fundamental Education' approach promoted by Unesco in the '60s, as well as the Functional Literacy of the Experimental World Literacy Programme (Lind and Johnston, 1990).

(ii) Freire's approach of the early '70s which is based on a "deprived" view of illiteracy (Rogers, 1994a) and

(iii) The New Literacy or socio-cultural approach of the '80s which puts the emphasis on "different" literacies. Rogers shows the link between ideology and methods : the traditional view leading to a "literacy first" and top-down approach, contrasted with the more participatory New Literacy where "literacy comes second" (Rogers, 1994b: 46) and is not necessarily considered "a prerequisite for further development programmes". In the transition from describing learners as "deficit" to "deprived" to "different", the choice of literacy methodology is shown to reflect a political stance by the planners (1994a). The labels given to the various approaches to

literacy teaching (Freirean, functional etc.), as I mentioned earlier, can be quite misleading in practice: the implementation of the programme may reveal unsaid objectives very different from those stated in project proposals. A very common example is literacy programmes that claim to use Freirean methodology with empowerment as their objective but then turn out to be more 'functional' in their approach to literacy teaching (Rogers, 1994c).

Freire has been criticised by feminists for representing "oppression" in a narrow sense, overlooking the "multiple oppressions" faced by many women. The ideological approach to planning women's literacy therefore needs to take into account the theoretical models developed by feminists working on gender concepts. Moser's (1993) five gender policy approaches (welfare, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency, empowerment) provide an additional tool for analysing the kind of approach taken by governments and aid agencies towards women's literacy programming. The welfare approach has predominated and resulted in programmes that are concentrated on "women's subjects - health, children, families, cooking etc" (Rogers, 1994c) with primers that depict women in their traditional reproductive roles neglecting their roles outside the home (Bhasin, 1984). Development programmes following this approach tend to concentrate on meeting women's Practical Gender Needs[5] in their reproductive role[6]. The equity approach has come to be associated with changes in the legal status of women (e.g. banning child marriage or dowry) and has led to the introduction of legal literacy programmes. The anti-poverty approach has influenced the idea that women's literacy can lead directly into income-generating projects and has dominated many functional literacy programmes. "Functional" is here linked to women's productive role and the skills of basic literacy are seen as essential for keeping accounts and records of small businesses or savings groups. The efficiency policy approach has been the most popular since the 1980s because of the effects of structural adjustment policies and has promoted the idea that functional literacy can provide the skills and knowledge for women to work more efficiently for development. Unlike the anti-poverty approach, the emphasis is often on women's reproductive role: integrating health activities with literacy education so that mothers can work more efficiently in their unpaid roles as carers.

The fifth approach is empowerment, which arose out of the failure of the equity approach and has been developed from 1975 onwards. Through bottom-up mobilisation around their practical gender needs, women are encouraged to address their strategic gender needs and

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[5] Practical Gender Needs ("a response to immediate perceived necessity, identified within a specific context", Moser, 1993: 40) and Strategic Gender Needs (long term needs that "relate to gender divisions of labour, power and control", ibid.: 39) are key tools in the following analysis. Molyneux (1981) first made the distinction in terms of strategic and practical gender *interests*, but Moser translated the concepts into a planning context as *needs* (Moser, 1989).

[6] Women's triple role is another key concept in gender policy analysis : the ways in which policy makers recognise or choose to place different values on the differing kinds of work that women do. The three main kinds of work are reproductive, productive and community managing.

confront oppression. Freirean approaches to literacy with the emphasis on "consciousness raising" fit into this model, particularly through the influence of dependency development theory. Women's literacy programmes that aim to make women more aware of their oppression as women could be linked to the empowerment gender policy approach. The emphasis on Third World women and challenging concepts from Western feminism, also presents a clear parallel with the New Literacy Studies where the aim is to understand the cultural context of literacy practices. The learner is seen as "different" (Rogers, 1994a), just as within this approach to gender policy, women are seen as having different gender roles and needs according to their cultural context. Concepts such as how far the function of the literacy class itself is to provide social contact for isolated women (Dighe, 1995a) or the issue of *stigma* need to be defined in the specific local context, rather than assuming that all classes will help to "empower" women in these ways.

I have tended to suggest, as I did with the literacy approaches above, that approaches to gender policy can be clearly distinguished from each other. In fact, elements from differing approaches can be seen in the same programme and terms such as "women's empowerment" can be particularly misleading (Medel-Añonuevo and Bochynek, 1995). Often the term "empowerment" is linked to participation in income generating activities (Lind and Johnston, 1990), supporting an anti-poverty approach and interpreted in purely economic terms. The linking of "empowerment" to bottom-up planning in Moser's account suggests that women's role in planning and implementation is a key difference from the earlier approaches: literacy is here linked to "consciousness" in the sense articulated in more recent literature on participatory development planning, encompassing the "ability to think critically" (Stromquist, 1997). Though some writers (e.g. McCaffery, 1992) have stressed the need for women to become more active in the planning process, the empowerment approach has tended to become identified with learner-centred and directed activities in the classroom, but not necessarily led to women becoming involved in planning the programme as a whole.

I have deliberately not brought together the models used by literacy policy makers and gender policy makers to create a new theoretical model for analysing *women's literacy*. Claessen and van Waesemael Smit (1991) attempt to do this by identifying four approaches to women's literacy: welfare, family literacy approach, functional literacy and empowerment, though their analysis suffers from trying to present these approaches as static and unproblematic. It seems more useful to keep the models of literacy approaches and gender policy approaches as separate tools of analysis. For example, Moser's strategy of reaching women's strategic gender need through a practical gender need (such as health education) in the empowerment approach can help to explain the complexities implicit in Stromquist's "balance the knowledge that women seek with that which women need" (Stromquist, 1990: 107). Using Moser's gender policy approaches to analyse women's literacy programmes is particularly helpful for identifying their political objectives. Within the literature on women's literacy, the political implications of the various approaches tend to be understated and, for example, "empowerment" is presented as a social (overcoming cultural barriers) rather than a political objective. By contrast, Moser (1993)

brings out the "threatening" nature of certain gender policy approaches and how far they are popular with governments and NGOs. Several writers on women's literacy (e.g. Stromquist, Lind), by conflating the empowerment and efficiency or anti-poverty approach to gender policy, present empowerment as dependent on functional rather than consciousness-raising literacy.

Once the literacy research models and gender policy models are separated, a certain tension between policy and research approaches to women's literacy also comes into clearer focus. There has been a shift in research approaches but not necessarily in planning methodologies, which accounts for apparently contradictory statements (e.g. Stromquist, 1990, emphasising women's literacy as a challenge to patriarchy yet also suggesting that the knowledge women seek is not necessarily what they need). In other words, researchers have begun to take an ideological approach but still use a "take women and stir" approach to planning (Klein in Megarry, 1984: 26). In the context of women's literacy, the use of the word "motivation" is often a response to this perceived tension between research and policy: an attempt to explain why programmes are not working.

In my own research, I focused on planning and policy making within the case study development agencies, including the literacy practices involved, in order to develop a more complex understanding of the policy/planning/implementation[7] process. Planning as a discipline has moved from a technical concern with collecting the correct information using quantitative research methods to a consideration of the role of the planner as decision maker in the cultural and social context of programmes. This transition from technical to political concerns could be related to the earlier discussion of research approaches: a growing recognition of the subjective nature of social research and the ideological as opposed to autonomous models of literacy. The rise of participatory planning methodologies in the '80s and '90s then put the emphasis on the political agenda behind planning and brought into question the traditional separation of policy, planning and implementation (Conyers, 1982). Rather than the hierarchical view of the planner carrying out the orders of the policy maker (and the implementer following the planner's instructions), the roles can overlap and be equally "political" (there is a tendency to think of the policy maker as politician and the planner as technician). As I describe in the cases of HIL and Save, the situation was far more complex with planners, implementers and communities bringing in their own interpretation of policies.

Moser (1993) traces historically three planning traditions: classical (associated with the blueprint plan in the early 20th century), applied (characterising planning as "a set of rational procedures and methods for decision making" (ibid.: 85) in the '50s and '60s and still widely

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[7] As I will be using these terms frequently, it is useful to quote Moser's (1993: 6) distinction between them: "If policy is about *what to do*, then planning is about *how to do it*, the organization of implementation is about *what is actually done*".

used in project planning[8]) and transformative (now being developed and based on a recognition of the political dimension of planning, e.g. gender and environmental planning). Although most women's literacy programmes (e.g. Baliara, 1990) do not question the appropriateness of the project cycle model of planning, an ideological approach to literacy research points to the need for a transformative approach to planning where the planner is acknowledged as a political actor as "an expert providing 'value-laden' advice" (Moser, 1993: 87). The *transformative* approach to planning also relies on technical expertise: but the difference between this and earlier planning traditions is that techniques are recognised as having bias and as being used for a specific political purpose. Planners and researchers, though 'technicians' in one sense, also need to be regarded as political actors in the planning process.

Approaches to women's literacy in Nepal: a brief history and overview

The research, policy and planning models outlined above will provide the theoretical frames for analysing case study material in later chapters. Although the programmes I studied (HIL and Save USA) did not fit clearly into one of the literacy or gender planning approaches described above, the following overview of the different kinds of literacy programmes in Nepal gives an idea of the range of influences on staff, planners and participants.[9] Developments in literacy approaches in Nepal can be related to the above theoretical models to provide a planning and research perspective on the projects that I studied. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 will bring in the participants' perspectives to analyse how the following approaches to women's literacy evolve in practice.

The Government's involvement in adult literacy in Nepal dates from 1953 when Frank Laubach was invited to help prepare literacy materials for a mass literacy programme concentrating solely on reading and writing skills. By 1961, the literacy rate had risen by 7% to an overall rate of 8.9% and the Ministry of Education extended its literacy activities to include functional skills such as agriculture, health and social sciences in the curriculum. In 1970, the National Education System Plan (NESP) was drawn up - this sought to make adult education more responsive to local conditions and more functional. Under the NESP, two kinds of courses were offered : a ten month course offering vocational training as well as literacy instruction, and

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[8] Project planning has tended to adopt the *rational comprehensive planning methodology* which consists of several logical stages: problem definition, data collection and processing, formulation of goals and objectives, design of alternative plans, decision making, implementation, monitoring and feedback (Moser, 1993). NGOs have commonly adopted the project cycle model associated with rational comprehensive methodology, with its identification of distinct phases (problem identification, data collection, aims etc.).

[9] This section draws on my own experience of having worked on a UNESCO/Nepal Government pilot literacy programme in the Far West of Nepal, and interviews conducted as preparation for an ODA-funded community literacy programme. Shrestha (1993) has been particularly valuable for detailing the history and constraints facing literacy programmes.

a shorter course offering just the literacy instruction. In practice, these courses were deemed not to have proved relevant to their target populations, so this led to the setting up of a pilot literacy project in 1977 by the Centre for Educational Research, Innovation and Development (CERID), a research wing of Tribhuvan University. This rural development/ awareness-raising project culminated in a team from CERID, World Education and the Ministry of Education writing the literacy course **Naya Goreto** (meaning "A New Trail") which is the basis of most Government and NGO literacy programmes today.

The **Naya Goreto** course is said to have a "multi message" approach, "touching on a variety of life-related subjects, such as health, agriculture or family planning, in combination with literacy instruction" (Shrestha, 1993: 11). Many of Freire's concepts are adopted, such as the discussion of key words and pictures as the basis of each lesson but the overall objective of the course is functional literacy rather than "empowerment". Teaching methods used are supposed to be participatory and include games, role play and small group activity. However in practice, the limited training that facilitators receive and their own experience of rote learning in schools, mean that literacy classes are usually quite formal and teacher-centred. The course lasts six months and aims to bring people up to a standard of Grade 3 in the primary school. Surprisingly, though many NGOs have developed their own post-literacy materials (often using methods from the New Literacy approach outlined by Rogers (1994b), such as Learner Generated Materials and whole language approach), almost all of them rely on **Naya Goreto** for their basic six month course.

In a study of 50 NGOs implementing literacy programmes (Shrestha, 1993), all described literacy as an "entry point", saying that their classes served various functions (ibid.: 15) :

1. A group-building process : "if they are not motivated, we cannot do anything for them"
2. An NGO-orientation process : "in the literacy classes, we get to know people and they get to know us"
3. A training process : "without literacy, they cannot even move one step, because other development activities cannot be successful if participants are not literate"
4. An NGO strengthening process : by successfully implementing a literacy project, a local NGO can begin to establish its technical and financial credibility
5. An awareness-raising process : "Literacy can change their mentality and open their eyes to development".
6. A process of breaking through the cultural barriers : "Villagers, in general and women in particular, frequently lack the confidence to express opinions, to motivate others or even to participate in development programs that are unfamiliar to them".

Going back to my earlier section, these functions can be seen to link directly to the "autonomous" view of literacy, as being a necessary pre-requisite to development and there is no question of there being "multiple literacies". It is interesting how many of the above comments do not concern literacy at all - the class being a mechanism for other goals, such as establishing the NGO as a local institution and forming a group.

A few NGOs have chosen to challenge the functional approach adopted by the majority and the use of "packaged programmes" (SPACE, 1994) like **Naya Goreto**, calling their approach "Freirean" with the emphasis on political awareness leading to social action. Although the majority of NGOs focused on literacy for women describe their programmes as "Freirean" or "empowerment", their approach is actually closer to 'functional', linking literacy with income generating (see Lind's use of the word "empowerment"). The emphasis is more on imparting "coping skills" than on "raising consciousness" (Srinivasan in Guruge and Ryan, 1984). Only a few small scale NGOs have attempted to use a Freirean approach to raise awareness around women's issues, as opposed to economic oppression (e.g. Parajuli and Enslin,1990).

The arrival of REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques) in Nepal from December 1995, has increased interest amongst NGOs in the idea of linking literacy more directly to community development initiatives, though they also see material advantages in having the REFLECT label. During my research period in Nepal, I watched the approach grow in popularity until HIL, the NGO with whom I was based, wanted me to refer to them as REFLECT in my reports. When I questioned why (they were actually using a method based on PRA long before REFLECT appeared), they said that REFLECT is currently "making a lot of noise" (publicity) and there would be better funding prospects and career opportunities by adopting the label. This example illustrates how the link between the stated approach to literacy and teaching methodologies may not be based on educational considerations alone. HIL's reasons for calling their approach "REFLECT" in this case were purely practical and not necessarily an indication of a certain ideology. REFLECT, just as other Freirean approaches can in practice be closer to the autonomous than to the ideological model of literacy.

In Nepal, women make up 70-100% of participants in literacy classrooms, even in classes that are intended to be evenly mixed: as I discovered in Save's and HIL's areas, some men wanted to attend classes but felt they were for women (the "gendering" of literacy practices, Rockhill, ibid.). All NGOs focus on reaching women; not just because more women than men are illiterate (1995 literacy rates in Nepal were estimated at 14% female as compared to 40.9% male, EFA 1996) but "because they consider women a more reliable and secure investment" (Shrestha, 1993: 18). The objective of involving women in development through literacy, can be seen to vary in Nepal from Moser's welfare (gender policy) approach to the more common efficiency approach of most NGO and Government programmes. A review of the impact of women's literacy stated that "Female functional literacy can play a key role in nurturing and harnessing this tremendous potential of resources and productivity... the most visible impacts are in the areas of income generation, increased awareness of personal hygiene and sanitation,

aspiration for education and confidence building" (Development Alternatives Nepal, 1991: 10). Because literacy is regarded as key to women's more efficient role in Nepal's development, literacy programmes are run not just through the Education Ministry, but under separate ministries implementing agriculture, health and women's development programmes. In NGOs too, literacy is seen as an entry point for health education or income generating activities. Thus the functional approach to literacy has come to be identified with an efficiency approach to women's development, concentrating on women's reproductive as well as productive work.

The most commonly used primer, **Naya Goreto**, has been criticised for its gender bias: "there is a clear gender difference in presenting images of male and female. Females are shown working in the kitchen and other household work, fetching water and fuelwoods, child rearing and taking care of cattle. At the other side male images have been presented as working outside of the house, making decisions. In general, the literacy materials have limited women's' images within the household periphery" (Save US/ Women Development Division, 1995: 12). There is however a fine line between producing relevant materials which reflect the current situation and being accused of gender bias. A project supported by the University of Massachusetts, Literacy Linkage Programme, has been developing distance learning modules to train facilitators to use the bias within **Naya Goreto** to raise awareness of gender issues. Participants are encouraged to discuss, for example, why a picture shows a husband discussing family planning devices with a male health worker while his wife stands in the background. The idea of using materials that were originally designed for an *efficiency* approach to women's literacy, as part of an *empowerment* approach is appealing. However the training modules tend to be didactic in approach ("this is a typical example of a man taking a leadership and a decision making role in the family") and do not take account of the facilitator's own background. The methods and concepts around gender roles raise the issues I mentioned earlier around the Western origins of such ideologies : gender planning and training methodologies have been imported to Nepal from the West, in contrast to India where there has been a tradition of indigenous feminist theory.

Other Western-derived methods piloted in recent years include language experience approach, whole language and Learner Generated Materials (LGM) : all intended to promote a learner-centred approach to literacy, these could be seen as belonging to an empowerment approach. As women from ethnic groups such as the Tamangs or Gurungs are less likely to speak Nepali, these teaching methods which enable the use of mother tongue in the classroom are considered to be meeting women's specific needs. As I discuss in the next chapter, whether this approach to women's literacy is considered empowering depends very much on the participants' view of their own language and of Nepali language. Family literacy is an increasingly popular approach, often assumed to be empowering for women. However, in Nepal the concentration on women's reproductive role through, for example, the introduction of a "baby book"(recording a child's development) could be described as more functional, typical of an *efficiency* gender approach and importing Western literacy practices.

A recent workshop on Literacy and Women held in Kathmandu summarised the problems faced in women's literacy classes as due to time management (female participants cannot come at night), socio-cultural value of the society (the women do not get family support) and motivation (SC-USA/WDD, 1995). The discussion of motivation as due to "lack of family support" and "uninteresting facilitators and classes" supports my earlier point about the word 'motivation' being used to avoid a detailed analysis of the policy process.

Save USA and HIL : where do they fit in?

Looking at how the two case study literacy programmes fit into the more general schema of women's literacy programmes in Nepal, it is clear that the different organisational structures of both programmes influence not just what approach they take towards literacy but how they choose to describe and articulate that approach. The fact that Save USA is an internationally funded organisation with a head office in the USA meant that they had fully documented their approach through evaluation reports, manuals etc. By contrast, HIL, a small group of local activists, had spent little time in writing about their approach and explained to me when I arrived that their "weakness" was in writing reports. The information that I gathered about their approach and how it had developed over ten years was therefore through informal interviews with staff, previous trainers and participants. I will also include in this section a brief description of the classes that I regularly observed, as a necessary prelude to the more detailed analysis of these classes in the rest of this book.

Save USA's women's literacy programme

Save The Children USA began their programme in 1983 when they used the functional literacy course, Naya Goreto. Since then, they have been pioneering methodologies associated with the New Literacy approach to teaching (Rogers, 1994b), such as LGM, whole language and family literacy. They describe their approach as both functional and empowering for women : in terms of Moser's gender policies, Save seems to follow an anti-poverty approach. The objective of the women's literacy programmes is to raise awareness and provide the literacy skills for running a women's group:

> "literacy is an effective path for assisting women in group activities. SC made the program more relevant to the daily lives of the women by adapting the literacy course content to address key issues and especially economic needs in their lives" (Reinhold, 1993).

In 95/96, 87% of the students participating in Save NFE classes were female (SC USA, 1996). Every literacy class later becomes a "woman's group", with the aim of raising income

from saving and credit programmes and some vocational training. The family literacy programme is linked more directly to health education activities, with mothers becoming involved in monitoring their children's progress through "a book that we have written for our children" (SC USA, 95). This programme follows an efficiency approach to women's development, supporting their reproductive role and is in keeping with dominant aid agency models of the link between women's literacy, health and fertility. Relating Save's literacy activities to the ideological approach, it becomes important to analyse what kind of literacy is being introduced and how far Street's analysis of "colonial" literacy could be relevant in this context of an American NGO transferring Western literacy practices (such as baby books).

An evaluation report covering five years of the Save US Gorkha programme refers to the Freirean influence behind **Naya Goreto**, the primer used in their basic literacy classes. Empowerment is described in terms of "a new sense of self-command in a greatly expanded and potentially comprehensible world" (Leve, 1993 : 19)[10]. The effects of the literacy programme are seen to be increased comfort speaking with people (41% of participants), new desire to experience the world, new confidence with people and personal empowerment (such as women changing their names to express their new self esteem). Another indicator of empowerment is taken to be the number of women class participants who voted in the last parliamentary election (82%). These examples show how "empowerment" can be linked directly to functional literacy and becomes defined less as a process, more in terms of measurable outcomes because of the research approach taken. A follow-up study has attempted to measure empowerment in terms of women's role in decision making within the household, through indicators such as the percentage of participants who "thought they could convince their husbands not to take a second wife" (Leve et al, 1997). This expanded definition of "empowerment" could be seen as the influence of the GAD approach (rather than the earlier WID perspective). Save has also introduced some training about legal issues into literacy classes (Manandhar and Leslie, 1994): drawing on the GAD equity approach.

[10] Rockhill (1993: 164) points out that empowerment arguments tend to be "directed at participation in public spheres of nature, economics, political and cultural activities" rather than empowerment in the home.

Save Arutar literacy class: a look inside [compiled from my fieldnotes]

The Majhi women in Arutar asked Save to run their literacy class for a second year. They attended the **Naya Goreto** adult literacy course for six months (also learning basic mathematics) and have now formed a women's group, contributing 10 rupees a month to a small fund. They can take loans from the group fund and receive training from Save in how to keep records of meetings and accounts. Save had appointed a chairman, secretary and treasurer from within the Arutar group. Save agree to run the follow-up literacy class as the nine Majhi women are the poorest in the village but other women are needed to make the class up to the required number. The other women who join the class are from very varied backgrounds - two school teachers' wives, three Brahmin (upper caste) farming women and a development worker's wife. Several of these women have been to school or taught themselves to read and write, rather than attending the previous year's course. They all have different reasons for coming to the class: to help their children with their homework, to learn to keep Save group records and to read letters from the Save office, to learn to read the religious books and one Majhi woman tells me she is only attending the class in order to ensure a loan from the group fund! Many of the women's husbands are unable to read and write but do not attend the class as they feel they would be out of place.

The facilitator of the Arutar class, Alina, is unmarried and about twenty years old. She belongs to the most wealthy and influential Newar family in the village and has just returned to her home village after a year studying at Gorkha campus (a day's walk away). Her mother (a former school teacher) was originally supposed to run the class but nominated Alina when she realised it would be too difficult to go out every night. Alina views the job as a learning experience and works very seriously, never missing a class : she is not interested in the money side (partly because the pay is so little). Her elder sister, Angila, is a teacher at the Arutar primary school.

The class takes place every night (except Saturday) "after eating" - which means the start is staggered from 7 p.m. (when Alina turns up and lights the lanterns) to 8.30. when the last participant arrives after cooking and washing up for the family. This is the only time of the day when the women are free as they are all married with children. The class is held in the primary school, situated next to the Majhi area of the village. Many of the women bring children with them for company on the path in the dark or because they cry if they leave them at home. The women sit in rows on the wooden benches (nailed to the floor) and Alina teaches at the blackboard at the front. Although Alina arranged (from her own money) to have an electricity line extended to the classroom, there is rarely electric light as the supply to the village is irregular or the school children steal the bulbs during the day! The women use oil lamps provided by Save or bring their own small wicks : there is never enough light to see easily and a lot of the class time is spent talking about the fact they cannot see the book. The course consists of reading passages, writing exercises and some sums (all from the course primer). Alina insists on teaching for a full two hours (as Save expects) though often several women and all the children are asleep by the end and have to be shaken awake for the walk home.

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HIL's approach to women's literacy

At first appearing to be functional and concentrating exclusively on women's reproductive role, HIL's literacy programme is one component of a larger community health programme and all the lessons are based on health topics with the idea of increasing women's awareness of health and hygiene topics. When I started to discuss the historical development of the literacy programme, I realised that the present functional approach was largely in response to the current donor's interest in health. The group of trainers and facilitators had originally been working with SPACE, a local NGO which uses a Freirean approach based on key words (but no primer) to initiate social action amongst oppressed groups, such as low caste squatters, and the literacy programme in Sanagow had in the past been aimed at encouraging carpet workers to demand better conditions (most of the literacy participants worked in the carpet factories). Before the coming of democracy (1990), SPACE had used the literacy programme as a way to mobilise support for the underground Communist party activities. As many of the facilitators and staff were part of the previous programme, they still see their approach as to "empower" participants: limited however by present funding to the health context, they have written lessons around "health rights" encouraging participants to demand accountability from health officials.

The HIL team followed Freire's conscientisation approach, but it was not clear how far "empowerment" in terms of Moser's policy objectives was part of their agenda. Although all the participants and most of the facilitators were women, "empowerment" seemed to be viewed as a political (empowering the poor) rather than a gender issue. The only exception was the enthusiastic reception in classes of a reading passage on "Alcohol" which described how a woman locked out her husband for coming home drunk. The literacy classes were not followed up by other development activities as in Save, though younger girls were encouraged to join school after the literacy course finished. The HIL classes seemed to be seen as an opportunity for women to catch up with men on literacy skills (which as boys they had learnt in school) and this objective influenced the kind of literacy that was taught in class.

Inside the classrooms : HIL Lalitpur

The HIL classes have one thing in common: nearly all the women attending do not speak Nepali as their first language, though Nepali is supposed to be the medium of instruction. They are therefore learning to read and write in Nepali, rather than their mother tongue, Newari or Tamang. The basic literacy course runs for six months and includes Nepali reading and writing, health education and mathematics. The follow-up course runs for a further six months and includes written English instruction. All facilitators (the majority of whom are women and live near their classes) attend a weekly training session of two hours at the Tikkathali HIL health centre. Even the two facilitators from Malatar, a five hour walk away, manage to attend these weekly sessions. The literacy organisers are based in a small room at Thecho, a Newari area where another four classes run (about an hour by bus from the classes discussed below).

Compiled from my fieldnotes, the following descriptions are of the classes I visited most frequently : all within about fifteen minutes walk of each other.

Anita's class in Changanathali is a basic literacy class. The women attending are a real mixture of ages : some very young girls who have dropped out of primary school and some married women in their forties who have grown-up children. Some of the younger women dropped out of the class early on as they found it too easy - they complained that all they did was counting to twenty. The older women find the pace too fast and many stop going once the reading passages become more complex. They are all Newari, but the older women have difficulty following Nepali and are embarrassed to speak it - unlike the younger girls who have mixed with non-Newari speakers in the carpet factories. The older women spend most of the day outside their houses weaving straw mats, though a couple are involved in shop work. The married women say that their husbands encourage them to attend the class (the men have all attended school). The facilitator, Anita, is about twenty and her family owns the only electric mill in the village. She studied at school, but has failed the school leaving examination three times. She now works voluntarily for HIL's health programme and clinic during the day and teaches the literacy class at night. She finds it difficult to teach because the older women are very disruptive, joking and laughing because they understand little Nepali. The class is held in a half-built barn owned by one of the women - although there is electric light, the concrete room with only sacks at the windows, is cold in winter. The women usually come to class at about 7 p.m. and Anita stops teaching when they are too cold or tired. The class is frequently cancelled because of local festivals, marriages and funerals.

Sharda's class in Sanagow consists almost entirely of teenage (unmarried) Newari girls who work in the carpet factories by day. They are very keen to learn literacy, more to feel that they will be "educated" like their brothers who go to school, than for any functional reason. They attend regularly and are punctual turning up early evening. This is a follow-up class so they are now learning English as well as Nepali. Though they are all Newari speakers, they have a good comprehension of Nepali. Sharda is unmarried and in her late twenties. She learnt to read and write in literacy classes, then moved on to become a facilitator. By day she works on a loom weaving cloth. The class is held in her own house - a cosy room lit by electricity. Sharda sits by a blackboard on the floor to teach and the girls sit on mats round her in a circle. She teaches a mixture of maths, Nepali and English, according to what the girls feel like doing. She enjoys teaching and is keen to get further work with HIL : she and the girls want HIL to provide a sewing machine and training as "follow up" to the literacy course. But HIL feel a bridging course would be more appropriate, so that the girls could join formal school.

Nirmala teaches in Tikkathali, the village where the weekly training sessions are held. Her class consists of both Newari and Chhetri (Nepali speaking) women, mostly older married women. Nirmala is Nepali speaking and wonders if this is why she had a huge drop-out: there are now only four women left (including her mother and her aunt). Tikkathali is renowned for having much inter-caste conflict. Nirmala continues to teach quite formally in the upstairs room of the HIL clinic - the four women sit at benches while she stands at the blackboard. She is a keen health volunteer at the clinic by day and has attended many training programmes run by HIL. She eventually has to close the class because of insufficient numbers.

Bina's class in Sanagow originally consisted of both married and unmarried women, which meant that there was disagreement over what time to run the class - the younger girls wanted it early evening but the married women could not finish their domestic duties in time. Now mostly unmarried girls attend the class - the married women also faced opposition from their husbands and one man tore up his wife's folder so that she could not attend. Bina teaches in the bedroom of the house opposite her own (there are usually children asleep on the bed in the corner of the class). She has to pay rent for the classroom from her salary, though the house is owned by a class participant. She travels into Kathmandu by bus each day to attend the campus where she is studying commerce at intermediate level (like 'A' level). She enjoys teaching the literacy class because of the health knowledge that she has gained herself. After the course ends, she continues teaching the women voluntarily on a weekly basis.

Conclusion

This chapter sets up a theoretical framework for analysing the later case study material, introducing tools to analyse what kind of literacy and what kind of development shape women's literacy programmes in Nepal. Making a distinction between theories used by researchers and by policy makers, I avoided the suggestion that certain research approaches fit naturally into a certain policy model, or vice versa. In fact, the literature on women's literacy programmes seems to reflect a tension between literacy teaching approach and planning methodology. Rather than using labels like Freirean to describe a literacy approach, theoretical models (such as ideological versus autonomous models of literacy or gender policy approaches) can provide more insight into how literacy and development processes are linked: most planners in Nepal have seen functional literacy in purely technical terms (an autonomous approach) as enhancing women's efficiency in their reproductive and productive roles.

To conclude by drawing out from the above theoretical debates exactly which concepts and theories will be useful in my own analysis of data, the discussion on gender policy models and literacy theory can be seen as key to clarifying objectives of literacy programmes and how far gender is an issue within that development approach. The two major theories discussed here (of gender and literacy) also enable us to unpack terms such as 'empowerment' which can often be equated with 'functional' in the literacy context or 'confidence' in relation to women. Questions arising out of the theoretical debates described in this chapter include: which women

and whose needs are being addressed in the programme? Where are literacy methods/ gender concepts coming from and how are they influenced by the local context? What kind of literacy practices are women engaged in at home, as well as in the class? What parallels does the literacy class have with school, as a mechanism reproducing or challenging gender relations, in the kind of literacy taught? These are some of the questions that I will be looking at next by bringing in the women participants' and facilitators' perspectives on the theories of literacy and gender discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

Sharda, a HIL literacy facilitator, writes English and Nepali on the blackboard and explains to the class using their mother tongue, Newari language

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CHAPTER FOUR

WHOSE LANGUAGE? LANGUAGE AS A POLICY ISSUE

Introduction

Hikmat, a health assistant working for HIL, has been invited to give a health education session on "Communicable Diseases" to the literacy class in Malatar, a predominantly Tamang speaking community (though HIL's literacy materials are in Nepali). Hikmat comes from outside the local area and is a high caste Brahmin, unlike the literacy class facilitators, Lalita and Naresh, who are Tamangs[11].

About twenty-five women had arrived, so Hikmat started his lesson: "Saruwa rog (communicable disease in Nepali) means one gives a disease to another". He asked the class for examples and made a list on the blackboard in Nepali: measles, cough, TB, scabies. He wrote a heading: Swas (from breathing), then listed TB as the biggest disease, writing and saying it in English and Nepali. He gave the symptoms and causes, saying that in the village the young will eat the old people's jutho (food left over after they have touched it). "This habit means TB will spread and so we should not eat anyone's jutho, even our own family members'. You can tell by an X-ray and a test if you have a cough."

By now, lots of children had come in the door to watch and the village chairman was also at the back. Hikmat said the BCG (written in English) would prevent TB. He wrote up [in Nepali] diphtheria, whooping cough, sinusitis - then crossed out the latter when Lalita, the literacy class facilitator, questioned whether it was actually communicable. All the women were talking in Tamang language (their mother tongue), not looking at the board. Lalita shouted at someone to throw her a copy book (to take notes).

Hikmat seemed oblivious to the noise and carried on with a lecture about rheumatic fever. He started to talk about heart disease, then stopped himself saying

[11] See Appendix IV or explanation about caste

it was not communicable. Next he wrote up typhoid and jaundice and said they were transferred through "close contact" (using the English words). He stopped and asked the women not to talk. If they didn't understand, they should ask him to repeat things. He said there were three types of jaundice: hepatitis A, hepatitis B and non-A, non-B hepatitis (all in English). "Your eyes become like a goat", suggested Lalita in Nepali - then she laughed and added, "but you won't have eaten that as you're Brahmin" (to Hikmat). Hikmat carried on talking - saying that if your headache still hurts after taking paracetamol, you should go to a doctor. Lalita asked him to say what you should not eat if you have typhoid. He said you should only have liquids, nothing hot, but milk, lentil soup and jeevan jal (rehydration therapy) are all right. You should not have rice, only liquids. For jaundice you should not have greasy or hot food but you can have sweet and bitter foods[12]*. Lalita said (joking) : "oh, so you can have alcohol because that is bitter". She and the other facilitator were taking notes, but the women in the class were all chatting.*

Next came Cholera : ""you have to use the toilet, clean your hands and cut your nails to prevent this", said Hikmat. Then Worms - Lalita said they had already done that topic in the literacy class. Hikmat got fed up with the noise and threw the chalk at a woman, asking her to sing a song. Lalita asked him to sing a Lamjung song instead (his home district), adding facetiously that if they had known he wanted them to sing songs, they would have written one specially earlier in the day and brought it with them. She said the women were talking because they couldn't understand him and he should try to do less English. Hikmat said this was not a joking place - he carried on with Worms, saying in Nepali that you should make sure sugar and rice is clean before cooking it and always defecate in the toilet.

Lalita asked about amoebas and he drew a tiny picture on the board of an amoeba and a cyst. Lalita said she had heard you can die from it, and she asked for the symptoms. Hikmat said "diarrhoea". Two girls next to me were playing with their shawls, trying to wrap one shawl round two of them. A group of about five started to write words on their hands in Nepali, spelling out the letters aloud. Then they got their course sheets out and started reading to each other. The buffalo was snorting in the corner and when it started to pee, we could hardly hear Hikmat's voice.

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[12] This is a reference to the traditional ayurvedic system of medicine which divides foods into 'hot' and 'cold' which are then appropriate for certain illnesses. For example, diarrhoea is considered a 'hot' illness so yoghurt, a 'cold' food, should not be eaten.

Hikmat went on to nervous diseases - polio, meningitis, leprosy. Then he said he would talk about the diseases that made people feel shy - syphilis and Aids (English words). He said you should remember that you can get Aids from a needle that had been in someone with Aids, not from food. He said, "if you feel itching and have white discharge when you pee, you should go to hospital immediately as it is syphilis. You can catch this from your husband". Suddenly Hikmat stopped and said "now it is time for you to talk". The village chairman said, "it is too difficult to understand because of your language". Lalita asked if there was a medicine for Aids. Hikmat said, "no, but you can get medicine for gonorrhoea". Lalita asked him to write the names of the medicines on the board. He wrote them up with doses in English. He said first they have to do a skin test and if you feel dizzy you have to have a different medicine. They call it STD, Sexually Transmitted Disease, he explained (in English). He said there is no injection yet for Aids but you can prevent it by not going with other people or by using a "condom" (he used the English word then corrected it to Dhal, the Nepali brand name).

Hikmat sat down as if to finish. Naresh said, "it's not nine o'clock yet". Hikmat said, "if they don't understand my language, what can I say?" Mani, the supervisor from HIL office, asked the women if they had understood Hikmat and an older woman at the front said in Nepali, "we don't understand English". Hikmat said they needed to know English as the medicine names are in English : "if you write in Nepali letters and take it to a shop, they won't give you the medicine". The women said, "but you could write it in Nepali so that we could understand it". Hikmat wrote Nepali letters above the English words that he had written on the board and sat down again.

Fieldnotes: Malatar (HIL), 7/11/95

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This extract from my fieldnotes shows clearly that for the women in this literacy class, the facilitators and staff of the project, language is an issue to be constantly battled over. The health education session began with Hikmat trying to put his ideas across in Nepali language. When the women failed to understand, they reacted by chatting and reading their literacy primers. Hikmat then resorted to using more and more English and became defensive about his use of English for technical terms. The facilitators challenged him more openly and in the end, he was defeated by the women demanding that he wrote the medicine names in Nepali script. The choice of language and script for the lesson is not simply an educational issue - which language can be understood by the majority of students - but a matter of power. When Hikmat speaks English, he feels he can exert his authority over the class, demonstrating his superior technical

knowledge and status. The women realise this and actually try to get access to this knowledge through forcing him to write in Nepali, with which they are more familiar.

On a policy level, rather than considering reasons for and constraints against using a certain language (for example, English for drugs names), it is more useful to analyse the power dynamics between the various languages and registers used. Grillo (1989) provides a useful starting point with his discussion of three approaches to the study of the politics of language. He identifies the ways in which "the political has been constituted in the study of language in society" (ibid.: 7) as : language as a political object, language as political resource and language as control. Taking the approach of "language as a political resource" - "the power that one person can exercise over another within a conversation" (ibid.: 10) - we could look at how Hikmat uses English to try and dominate the class. The approach of "language as a political object" where "language is thought of as an attribute differentiating one group of people from another" (ibid.: 8) is another important dimension of the conflict over language within the class described here.

In this case, language is not just an attribute associated with educational status (Hikmat as the educated health worker) but to do with caste and ethnic background. Lalita's comments to Hikmat about him not eating goat show how she tries to undermine him as a higher caste Brahmin. Her attempts to act as spokesperson for the women (saying they do not understand him) result not just from her position as teacher speaking on behalf of her students, but from her identification with them as a Tamang speaking group. Her irritation after he asks the women to sing a song (she retorts that he should sing a Dhading song instead) can also be seen in the caste context of lower castes, not Brahmins, being expected to sing and dance for entertainment. Lalita feels that he is asserting his higher status through asking them to sing. That Lalita, as a Tamang woman, was so assertive towards Hikmat, a Brahmin man, in this situation may be partly due to the fact that she knew the Tamang speaking women were in the majority. The village chairman was present in the room (also Tamang), giving weight to her words by the fact that although he was highest status in the village, he did not speak English.

This brief analysis has shown that what at first could be interpreted as a debate within the classroom about the choice of language of instruction, is actually a heated contest over social and ethnic power. The relationships between the people in the classroom - the teacher/ student relationship, the caste and gender relationships and the social structures within the village - influence how language policy evolves in practice. In HIL, Nepali was the chosen medium of literacy instruction (though mother tongues were used for discussion) and was used for administrative purposes rather than English. However, Hikmat's background as professional health worker and his academic training in the Kathmandu Institute of Medicine no doubt influenced his choice of language in the classroom, more than the organisation's policy on language. I have not mentioned the effect of my presence as an English speaking observer - though Hikmat knew I understood Nepali, he was also keen to identify with me as the high status foreign researcher visiting the class. Another dimension also omitted from my account of the class is the women's discussion with each other. I could not understand Tamang language so

could not judge how far they could follow Hikmat's lecture except by their observed actions, such as reading their primers instead of participating. These are issues that need to be set in the context of the previous chapter about how to 'read' my fieldnote text.

This chapter will look in more detail at the language policy within the organisations that I worked with: not as a given fixed policy, but as a process evolving in different ways according to the specific social and political contexts. Though the process has been hinted at in certain accounts (e.g. Kwesiga, 1994), the conflicts and contradictions in policy formulation tend to be downplayed in order to concentrate on the outcomes. I hope to show that the policy outcome itself, which language is chosen and why, may not be as important for planners and researchers, as understanding the social (including gender) power relations at play during the process of policy formulation and implementation.

Language planning and policy : the issues

The question of which language to use in literacy programmes needs to be seen in relation to specific educational policies, but also in the context of language planning within the country as a whole. Language planning is a relatively new field, dating from the 1960s (Crystal, 1987) and was adopted in many developing countries as part of their attempt to modernise the economy (Rubin and Jernudd, 1971). Growing out of a specific policy approach, modernisation, language planning could be seen as shaped by this development discourse. Over the years, the field of socio-linguistics has influenced how planners look at language, moving from a purely technical view where changes are made to the structure of the language (corpus planning) to the more social/ political view of status planning ("about uses of language", Hornberger, 1990) and acquisition planning ("about users of language", ibid.). Although the social issues around language choice and development are now seen as inseparable from the technical issues, language issues are today still given little attention in mainstream education and development debates, being left to linguists (Watson, 1999).

From a social view of language, has come the realisation that "questions of language are basically questions of power" (Chomsky in Grillo, 1989). In my earlier analysis of Hikmat's use of English in the health class, the issue was not simply whether his language was socially or culturally appropriate but largely one of power. With the recent interest in the "relationship between orders of discourse and language systems" (Fairclough, 1996), the focus of language planning changes from the idea of a language policy fitting a country's 'needs' to a consideration of the linguistic and power relationships between the state and individuals. Fairclough suggests that "critical language in language education is the necessary basis for the reflexivity and creativity we are already finding we need as workers, citizens and in our ordinary lives" (ibid.: 12). This more political view of language leads us directly into the issue of language policy within education. Although educational planning may be intended to reinforce or implement language planning policies for the state as a whole, the power relationships at the local level,

even between individuals in a classroom (as in my example) may mean many contradictions or conflicts in practice. As Yates (1994) suggests, there is a need to consider both the "micro and macro implications of language policies" so "planners may benefit from adopting a micro ethnographic approach" (ibid.: 309).

Language policy in literacy programmes

In 1953 UNESCO declared that literacy work was best done in the vernacular (Barton, 1994b) and since then there has been much debate around the social, political, linguistic, educational and economic implications of such policy. Though the original policy arose from the educational conviction that reading and writing skills are acquired more rapidly in the mother tongue (Heath, 1990), there is now more attention paid to the social and political dimensions of implementing such a policy. For example, DfID (1999: 26) promotes the "acquisition of literacy skills in a familiar language" but also stresses the need for "access to opportuities embodied in a more widely used national language.." The question is therefore not just a matter of which language will be best understood but which language is valued as a social or political asset. The importance of understanding the value and use of languages within different domains (including education) is a crucial step in language policy formulation: different languages are used in different domains (Barton, 1994a). When transposed to a different domain, some languages are no longer valued or deemed appropriate. For example, minority languages may not be considered appropriate in higher education or national level institutions. All these factors will influence how a mother tongue language policy in literacy programmes is regarded by participants and planners.

Aside from the political and social considerations, there are many practical constraints to implementing a mother tongue policy in literacy programmes. These include linguistic dilemmas such as how far to standardise dialects, how to reflect diglossia[13] in the literacy programme and providing scripts for previously unwritten languages and the financial costs of trying to provide materials for many different languages (Ryan, 1990). The issue of diglossia will vary in importance according to the language concerned. In languages like Hindi and Nepali, the gap between the spoken and written forms is very wide : there is a "characteristic cleavage between the High (H) variety which is based on a codified written standard and the Low (L) variety whose usage is determined in the market place" (Coulmas, 1989: 195). Any language policy for Nepali literacy programmes therefore needs to take account not just of the technical difficulties of developing an L variety of written Nepali, for example, but the social implications of trying to narrow the gap between spoken and written language. Diglossia may be reflected in the curriculum of the literacy programme itself where participants can be encouraged to critically

[13] Diglossia is defined as "the use of two varieties of a language throughout a speech community, each with a distinct set of social functions" (Crystal, 1987)

engage with the different forms of a language (Ghose and Bhog, 1994) or be regarded as a barrier to be overcome (as is more usual).

Educational language planning therefore needs to be seen in the context of language policy for the country as a whole, since the use and value of languages within the "domain" of the classroom will be determined by how they are used in public life. Language planning for literacy programmes, though originally regarded as a *technical* field, should now be considered a social and political exercise since every language has a different and changing value to its users. Similarly decisions within literacy programmes, such as which script to adopt, cannot be regarded in isolation from the particular social context. This theoretical perspective on language and literacy planning has implications both for research and policy. Researchers need to examine not only statistical and macro issues, but also micro ethnographic accounts (such as my opening extract) of literacy and language use in practice.

Languages and language policy in Nepal

An understanding of the historical development of language policy in Nepal and of the varying statuses of languages therefore is essential before we can consider how individual literacy classes "take hold of" language. There are seventy or so different languages and dialects spoken in Nepal (Shrestha, 1994)[14], and only 58.4% of the population speak Nepali, the national language, as a first language (Manandhar, 1993: 1). The issue of whether to teach in local languages is one that has only recently been addressed, since a democratic government took over in 1990 (ibid.). Before 1990, Nepali was the only recognised language for schools, the radio and the civil service. The government strongly promoted the idea that: "a single national language can be a binding force that contributes to building national unity within a rich cultural diversity" (World Education, 1989). Since 1990, there has been official recognition of local languages and the constitution states that "each community shall have the right to operate schools up to the primary level in its own mother tongue" (Thapaliya, 1996). Radio Nepal likewise "embarked on the welcome yet sensitive task of recognising Nepal as multi-ethnic and multi-lingual" (Shrestha, 1994). In August 1994, it began broadcasting news in eight nationally recognised languages.

The problems that Radio Nepal has faced in trying to implement the new languages policy relate to "lack of funding, expertise and a corpus of literature, not to mention political backlash from

[14] Estimates vary enormously as to the number of languages: the 1991 census lists only 31 languages but it is clear that certain languages (e.g. Tibetan) have been omitted for political reasons. The confusion between dialect and language may also have added to the lack of agreement over the number of languages: "one of the most difficult theoretical issues in linguistics is how to draw a satisfactory distinction between language and dialect" (Crystal, 1987: 25)

perceived slights from different communities" (Shrestha, 1994). The lack of standardisation is also an issue as languages vary so much from place to place: for example, "Gurung language concentrated only in the central mid hills of the country, lacks uniformity" (ibid.). A National Languages Policy Recommendation Committee was set up to tackle some of the problems faced over the new multi-lingual policies and among their recommendations were: replacement of Sanskrit at middle school by mother tongue[15], setting up of a linguistics department at Tribhuvan University to prepare necessary manpower in vernacular languages and inclusion of linguists in the census programme because the available data on languages is not reliable[16]. These issues could be related to my earlier account of constraints faced by planners in developing literacy programmes in the vernacular: unstandardised dialects, diglossia, "reading readiness" (extent to which literacy is used in a society), but above all the "big human and material costs" involved (Ryan, 1990).

In the field of literacy teaching in Nepal, it is clear that the same political, economic and technical factors mentioned above (desire for national unity through promotion of Nepali, cost and technical constraints on developing minority languages) have influenced the development of the most commonly-used literacy course, **Naya Goreto (A New Trail)**. The set of primers, **Naya Goreto** was developed from 1977, based on a pilot project in the West of Nepal. Although the course predates democracy and the current multi-lingual policies, the project staff did actually consider the possibility of using local languages, as "they were initially not comfortable with the idea of teaching beginning literacy in a language that was not readily spoken by the participants" (World Education, 1989: 31). In the end however, they decided to "reinforce the government's policy to promote the national language (Nepali)" though they recognised that "the program might have been more focused and perhaps more relevant to each community had it produced tailor-made materials for each ethnic and linguistic group" (ibid.). The costs of producing such materials are mentioned as a major reason for adopting a single language policy, plus the fact that the class participants were "usually eager to learn Nepali" : "they perceived the national language as a means of access to the world outside their own communities" (ibid.).

The programme planners also brought out the issue of diglossia in their account of the development of **Naya Goreto**, saying that "formal Nepali writing as found in the national newspaper for example, uses a great many Sanskrit loan-words" and that "a project objective was to enable the participants to read and write the same language that they spoke and understood and the literary language was not introduced in the basic literacy course" (ibid.: 30). Language planners tended to regard the diglossic nature of Nepali language as a technical hurdle, rather than a social or cultural issue, and did not see the necessity for participants to learn to handle diglossia through reading both H and L varieties of Nepali in the course. The

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[15] Sanskrit is no longer spoken though it is used for praying (similar to Latin in Europe), so associated with the Brahmin priest caste.

[16] In the 1991 census, there were apparently no Tibetan speakers in Nepal, a clearly political failure to recognise the language.

implication of this approach was that new readers would find it difficult to understand newspapers etc., but the planners hoped that publishers would be encouraged to prepare easy-to-read literature. The growth of "post literacy" materials (Rogers et.al, 1998) has meant such literature is available, but the initiative came from the same agencies who promote the literacy programmes rather than from private publishers.

Although the government course **Naya Goreto** is still only available in Nepali and in L register, since 1990 several NGOs have been experimenting with mother tongue teaching in literacy classes. The Language Experience Approach (LEA) and Learner Generated Materials (LGM) have enabled these organisations to produce low-cost literacy materials in the participants' mother tongues. Research has also been carried out into how far Nepali primers are understood in non-Nepali speaking areas : although participants could read the script, they had often invented their own meanings for the Nepali words (Manandhar, 1993). The extent to which mother tongue teaching is welcomed by communities or is effective as a medium varies according to the area and ethnic group and the relative statuses of the languages concerned.

The Newari language in Arughat (Save) and Lalitpur (HIL)

To take Newari, a language spoken in both my research sites, the following example shows how even within one area, the attitude towards a language can be ambivalent. Newari is spoken as the mother tongue by the vast majority of the Newari caste (Nepali, 1965), though it is now written in Devanagari[17] script (the same as Nepali, though Newari, unlike Nepali and Sanskrit, is of Sino-Tibetan rather than Indo-European origin, Crystal 1987: 52)[18]. Of the group of Tibeto-Burman languages, Newari has the oldest literature and formerly had its own alphabet which was a modification of the Kutila or Eastern form of the script current all over North India up to the 7th. Century. In Sanagow, the area just outside Kathmandu where I worked, Newari is spoken almost exclusively at home and in community transactions. Nepali is spoken in schools and as a result, most men (though very few older women) can speak fluently in Nepali. All reading and writing is carried out in Nepali language and script (in the H register, apart from literacy classes and primary schools). Any discussion of which language should be used in literacy programmes therefore needs to be framed in terms of different languages being used in different domains.

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[17] "Nowadays, Devanagari is often used for the reduction to writing of hitherto unwritten languages" (Coulmas, 1989: 186). Devanagari has 48 letters; 13 vowels and 35 consonants. Although each grapheme corresponds to a spoken syllable, Devanagari is not considered to be a syllabic writing system since vowels are indicated by diacritical marks (ibid.).

[18] Surprisingly Newari (along with Nepali) appears in the list of 169 languages published by the US Dept. of Education, considered to be "critical" in the sense that "knowledge of them would promote important scientific research or security interests of a national or economic kind" (Crystal, 1987: 342). Given the small number of Newari speakers, the fact that Newari is considered "critical" may be an indication of the relatively high position Newaris enjoy in Nepali society, including access to education in the West.

When the HIL literacy programme began ten years ago in Sanagow, the team of trainers started to produce Newari materials (in Devenagari script), but the women attending the classes insisted that they should learn Nepali language. The materials are now in Nepali but nearly all discussion in classes takes place in Newari (most of the HIL staff and the class facilitators are Newari). The women's view of Newari is linked closely to their ethnic identity : they refer to Nepali as "Chhetri language" (Chhetri being the dominant non-Newari caste in the area) or "pahadi language" (meaning "hill language", a mocking term used by Newaris who regard themselves as the more civilised town dwellers, unlike other castes who are concentrated in the rural hill or mountain areas). Although the women are scornful of Nepali speakers and their use of Newari is very much integral to the life of their closely-knit communities, they nevertheless see the value of learning Nepali and in some ways it has a higher status because of the link with education and government.

In the Arughat area where Save USA run their programme, the Newari communities are in a minority, having migrated in small groups from Kathmandu long ago. They tend to be economically dominant, many of them running shops and small businesses and they have been successful in the education system : most of the teachers in the local schools are Newari. In the village where I stayed, the Newar families had taken over from the Brahmins as the traditional elite and were by far the wealthiest, employing even Brahmins as labour on their land. Compared to Kathmandu, Newari is less widely spoken in Newari homes, though in a mixed caste group, you would often hear Newaris speaking to each other in Newari. They were very aware that their version of Newari was considered inferior in Kathmandu ("pahadi Newari", "hill Newari"). The son in the house where I stayed, told me they never speak Newari when they go to Kathmandu, always Nepali, from fear of being made fun of by the Kathmandu Newaris.

Unlike in the villages near Kathmandu, Arughat Newaris learn the language in a more formal way: the older men in the family where I stayed would teach the youngest son (aged three) to count in Newari, rather like a language lesson, and they would make a conscious effort to speak Newari rather than Nepali when they sat together in the evening. They seemed to regard Newari language as a symbol of their high status and identity as a group in the village and were eager to preserve the language. Everyone could speak Nepali fluently and the Newari that had evolved since they migrated to this area contained many Nepali words. There was no question of using Newari in literacy classes since even the older Newari women spoke and understood Nepali fluently and thus had no need to learn the language in the classroom, in contrast to the older women in HIL's area.

This discussion of the use and value of Newari in these two different communities illustrates just how difficult (or inappropriate) it is to generalise about languages and language policies. The value of Newari to both groups varied according to the social situation : whether Newari was being used as a way of expressing their identity as a group or whether Nepali was considered more appropriate to an education institution. As one Newari speaker insisted in a

class : "Newari is for the home, Nepali for the school" (linking to my earlier point of different languages being appropriate to different domains and diglossia (Barton, 1994a:71)). The relationship of Newari to other languages in the area was also an important factor in how it was regarded. In Sanagow, Newari is spoken by the majority but they are aware that it is a minority language in terms of access to education and government service. In Arughat, a minority speak Newari, but they are significantly the wealthiest section of the society, and value the language for the status it gives them as an elite group.

English language policy in Nepal

I have so far not mentioned English as an important missing element in the language debate in Nepal. Unlike India, where English became the language of administration and education after colonial rule, Nepal has always established that Nepali is the language of government. However with the increasing presence of foreign aid agencies, English is becoming more widely spread and even within Government ministries there are now technical units (foreign-funded) which use English for their reporting and administration. Kansakar (1983: 199) points also to the promotion of English teaching as a factor in achieving economic goals, "recognising English as the language of wider communication with outside communities and a means for acquaintance of scientific and technical knowledge of the modern world". He discusses the difficulties of using Sanskrit to supply vocabulary for technical fields, suggesting that it "may be more economic and sensible to borrow terms that are already in use internationally than to depend on an old 'classical' language that cannot express such concepts.." (ibid.: 201). The issue now in common debate with regard to education is to work out "who needs English" rather than assuming that "English is a universally needed subject" (Jha, 1995: 115). However the rapid growth of privately run English medium schools ("Boardings" as they are known in villages) even in remote rural areas, shows that "parents from all socio-economic groups have an acute understanding of the connection that English has with modernity and technical advancements" (LaPraire, 1995: 132) and that it "will be politically difficult for governments to determine who will be given access to quality English language instruction" (ibid.).

In the context of literacy programmes, English is perhaps a more 'political' issue than mother tongue teaching, because of the assumed link with modernisation and foreign aid jobs. However, it is dangerous to generalise about the value of English as, like a local language, it is perceived in different ways according to the social situation, background of the speakers and relation to other languages. English in Arughat (Save's area) and English in Sanagow (HIL's area) has a different meaning, though in both situations, the gender issue is apparent.

In Sanagow (HIL), parents view the fee-paying English medium boarding schools as primarily for boys : girls are sent to the Nepali medium (free) government primary schools, or stay at home. English has been expressed as a need by the women who attend literacy classes and HIL has responded by developing a follow-up course that includes English teaching. I heard local

men laughing at the very idea of women (especially older women) learning English. In Arughat (Save), the one English boarding school has made less impact on the area and most families send both girls and boys to the local government school. English has however begun to become part of the local community through the work of development agencies like Save USA where the staff use English development terms and conduct all their office business in English. English is therefore perceived in the villages as a functional skill which could allow one to gain access to a highly paid position like Save staff. Although there is some interest in learning English (locals would like to have more trade with the foreign tourists who pass through), Save believes that their grassroots activities (as opposed to their office administration) should be conducted in Nepali only and they have not seriously considered teaching English in literacy classes.

Politics and the language question

This overview of how language policy has evolved over the years in Nepal should give some idea of how the "two opposing influences on local literacies", globalisation and diversification (Barton, 1994b: 3) have affected how far the various languages are valued and promoted. The single party system under the Panchayat government promoted the idea of Nepali as a single unifying language; whereas after democracy (1990), there has been a move by both NGOs and Government to promote and recognise the diversity of ethnic groups through teaching of local languages. The increasing spread and importance placed on English as a medium of instruction can be linked to the influence of globalisation and how far it is perceived as giving better employment opportunities and higher status.

Although I have generalised here about language policy at the macro level, what I have also stressed in the accounts of Newari and English in the differing Arughat and Sanagow contexts, is "the ever changing relationship between different languages and literacies" (Education for Development, 1994: 102). This relationship influences how the speakers regard their own language and is really key to how far literacy in minority languages can be considered empowering. With regard to women's literacy programmes, this ambivalence around the use of a certain language is particularly relevant and ironically, seems to be an aspect ignored by the agencies developing such programmes. The changing relationship between different languages in the two agencies, Save USA and HIL, and the implications this has for the gender dimension of their literacy programmes, will be the focus of this chapter. Rather than focusing on language policy and outcomes, I will analyse language processes and how the various key players (women participants, facilitators, planners) interact around language issues.

Code switching

Before going on to look at the two case studies, I will briefly discuss code switching, a concept which is not only helpful in the analysis of my data but also needs to be considered at a policy level within possible language policy options. Conversational code switching is described by

Gumperz (1982: 60) as different from diglossia where "distinct varieties are employed in certain settings (home, school etc.) that are associated with separate bounded kinds of activities". Whereas in diglossic situations, speakers only employ one code at any one time, conversational code switching refers to when bilingual speakers mix languages within one conversation or even one sentence. Gumperz suggests that this form of code switching is "most frequent in the informal speech of those members of cohesive minority groups in modern urbanising regions who speak the native tongue at home, while using the majority language at work.." (ibid.: 64). The codes can thus be characterised as the "we" code and the "they" code.

Gumperz's analysis of code switching can be used as a basis for looking at how and why speakers switch codes within the classroom. "Code switching provides evidence for the existence of underlying, unverbalised assumptions about social categories, which differ systematically from overtly expressed values or attitudes" (ibid.: 99). So in my introduction to this chapter, I was able to use my observations about how Hikmat switched from Nepali to English to draw conclusions about his "unverbalised assumptions" about his social and ethnic position. Gumperz's analysis points to the importance of political and social meanings that may lie behind code switching However there is also a strong notion of necessary consensus between speakers: "switching strategies serve to probe for shared background knowledge" (ibid.: 70). As I showed in my opening analysis of Hikmat's lesson, code switching was used not so much to "probe for shared background knowledge" but to distance himself from the class. This situation of code switching leading to conflict because the listener cannot follow the 'they' code perhaps arises because conversation within the classroom is not of the informal kind that Gumperz describes. The hierarchical relationship between the teacher, Hikmat, and the women in the class, influences who has the right to determine conversational strategies like code switching.

I have introduced this analysis of code switching to move away from the idea of *pure* language as the only possible language policy option within an organisation or classroom. Code switching can become a strategy to cope with an unsuitable or unwanted language policy and should be considered within the context of language policy formulation and training for staff.

Language policy: the NGO versus the classroom

NGOs promoting literacy programmes often only consider language to be a classroom issue. Analysis of language policy and language choices within both the literacy classes and in the organisations as a whole, enables us however to see how far the objectives in each context conflict with or influence each other. HIL and Save USA contrast in their attitudes towards the use of English and Nepali within their organisations and within the classroom. As a local NGO set up by a group of Communist activists, HIL does not use much English within their office administration : one of the few times they write in English is for funding proposals to foreign donors (currently a Japanese aid organisation). Save USA, as an international NGO, conducts all office administration in English : even Nepali colleagues writing memos to each other in

Arughat wrote in English. It is from this starting point that I will look in more detail at how the language policy within each organisation has influenced how English, Nepali and local languages are used and valued in the literacy classes. In linking the literacy class and the development organisation, I am looking in a wider sense at how they reproduce or transform ideologies through their social structure and relationship to each other.

Save USA: contradictory language policies?

Save USA was one of the first NGOs in Nepal to address the issue of mother tongue teaching. In 1993, the Education Sector Head, Udaya Manandhar, co-ordinated a study in various non-Nepali speaking communities to see how far they understood and welcomed the Nepali course, **Naya Goreto**, and to work out more appropriate ways of teaching literacy in such areas. Following on from this research, Save now runs classes using the Language Experience Approach and Learner Generated Materials in local languages. The education staff in the field are also aware of the interest in mother tongue teaching: when I attended a training for literacy facilitators in Arughat, the trainer explained to me that the reason they had a lot of discussion in small groups was to allow trainees to use their mother tongues. [19]

Within the office structures however, Save actively promoted the use of English for both written and spoken communication. Staff were very aware that their promotion prospects within the organisation (particularly the possibility of moving from a field office like Arughat to the headquarters in Kathmandu) depended on their ability to speak and write English. I was frequently asked to correct reports and memos in English that were being sent to Kathmandu - one sectoral head bemoaning the fact that he spoke only "bazaar English" because he was educated in the local area, not in Kathmandu. I was surprised at the apparent contradiction within Save - promoting mother tongue teaching in the field but English in the office - and asked some of the senior Kathmandu staff how the policy had come about. They said that a few years ago, the issue of whether staff could write to each other in Nepali had arisen in the Kathmandu office. It had been agreed that if they felt happier writing in Nepali than English, then they could, but since then, noone had actually changed from using English.

I only fully understood the reluctance of the staff to use Nepali when I attended a gender training workshop in the Kathmandu office towards the end of my stay. The workshop had been organised by a Nepali member of staff who had just returned from gender training courses in the USA and Thailand. At the request of the director, she had organised a two day workshop

[19] In this particular case, the mother tongue was Gurung language but I never heard it spoken during the training programme. This was probably because the facilitators had all been through high school education in Nepali and in this area, Gurung was only spoken by the older generation. I met one older facilitator who spoke Gurung and he told me he could once sign his name in Gurung script, but even that he has now forgotten.

for all the senior staff of the Kathmandu office, with the help of a Dutch volunteer. This extract from my fieldnotes illustrates how the language issue arose straight away:

> *There were about seven staff at the training ... including ... the American director and ...[an] American advisor. Sarita started presenting in Nepali, explaining that gender is a very complex subject so it is impossible to cover everything in one and a half days (it was originally supposed to be three days but the room had not been available) so they would just aim to sensitise the staff first. [The director] interrupted her after her introduction and said in Nepali that although everyone understands Nepali, she should try to run this training in English. This is because she will be asked to run the training in Bangladesh and Pakistan afterwards so it would be practice for her. For professional reasons and her own career development, she should present everything in English (the flip charts, timetable etc. were all in English anyway). Sarita said in Nepali that she felt shy to speak English and that she felt better running it in Nepali, but [the director] insisted. So suddenly everyone had to speak English instead of Nepali.*
>
> *Fieldnotes: 21/3/96, Kathmandu (Save)*

As the workshop progressed, it was clear that the other staff (all Nepali) wanted to speak Nepali as the discussions on gender issues became more and more animated. In fact, as we broke into groups for various activities, everyone began to discuss in Nepali but the flip charts and summaries of discussions were still presented in English. In other words, there was code switching between English and Nepali according to the medium of instruction. Within Save, English appeared to be seen as part of the organisation hierarchy: senior staff were expected to conduct their workshops and discussion in English and the director (though he speaks fluent Nepali) on this occasion insisted on the use of English.

When I discussed the language issue with some of the staff at the workshop, they seemed to agree with the director - only field level trainings should be conducted in Nepali. Kathmandu training programmes for senior staff should be held in English. However the nature of the gender training (activities included drawing pictures of their early experiences around gender differences and discussing their emotions at that time) meant that the English register required in this context was not the register used in most office business. The use of English rather than Nepali tended to make these exercises more academic and to give less opportunity for real discussion. In some ways, it would have been difficult for Sarita to present the gender concepts entirely in Nepali as it transpired that there is no easy Nepali translation, even for the word "gender". One member of staff brought up this question early on and said that different institutions in Kathmandu were using different translations for "gender"; many simply using the Nepali word for "equality", others using "sex". This brief discussion highlighted the aspect that was lost through using English alone for the gender training : how to integrate or even translate

some of the gender concepts and tools into the Nepali context. Keeping the terms in English, it was likely they would remain academic Western concepts, whereas translating them into Nepali beforehand may have meant the concepts themselves were changed. In the end, the staff used code switching as a strategy to discuss the concepts, but I suspect this was viewed by themselves as a failure to speak adequate English.

This example of the gender workshop discussion on which language to use, could be compared to my opening extract from Hikmat's discussion on health education in English. Whereas in Hikmat's lesson, the women opposed the use of English, in the Save gender session, the participants were more ambivalent towards the use of English. They all sensed how closely English was bound up with the present hierarchy of the organisation : Sarita was told that her career development depended on the use of English. In the Arughat office, the situation was more complex : staff were working within an English-dominated office environment, but supposed to be using Nepali or mother tongues in their work with communities. I witnessed an amusing interaction between a member of staff and a village woman in the Arughat office, which shows the tension staff faced:

> *We were interrupted by a village woman coming in. She looked around the office and asked where Ramesh was. She said she was Ramesh's sister and had come here ... to discuss registration of their women's group. Sahana [staff member in charge of women's development activities] explained that Ramesh was in the "field" (using the English word) and the woman said, "where?" (thinking "field" was the name of a place). "In the village", Sahana said in Nepali, then asked if the woman was in a POP[20] group (using the English word). She didn't understand POP so Sahana asked her caste and that of the members - Nepali (low caste). "In that case, you have to make a toilet, a smokeless stove and this is called "community work" (did Ramesh tell you this?)."*
>
> *Fieldnotes : 21/2/96, Arughat (Save)*

Whereas in the villages, the staff were more careful about using English words like "the field" and "POP", in the office, they were more likely to slip into the language used for their reports and conversations with each other. In the training programmes that I attended in Arughat, this tension was also apparent - despite the intention of using Nepali and local languages, the trainers had problems not using certain English terms. A course for literacy facilitators which included a session on Learner Generated Materials (LGM) required a fair knowledge of English. Although Devendra, the trainer, translated the term LGM into Nepali, he proceeded to use the English word for the rest of the session and all the headings that he wrote

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[20] POP stands for Poorest Of Poor, the term used by Save staff to denote their target population.

up on the board (e.g. "free writing", "object writing") were in both Nepali and English. In this case, Devendra himself had received training in LGM from a visiting American professor so he was unable to abandon the English labels, since they were a large part of the LGM experience for himself. He ended up code switching, but as the facilitators did not speak any English, they seemed to feel confused by the English codes and felt this session was the hardest part of their training. Devendra's use of code switching was thus a useful strategy for himself, but unlike the Save gender training workshop, was not an option welcomed by the trainees.

The same process of code switching between Nepali and English could be observed in the Arutar literacy class that I observed nightly. The facilitator, Alina, had been educated up to campus level, and though she spoke Nepali to the class, was unable to stop using English words like "homework", "bench" and "para" (for paragraph) when she spoke to the literacy class. The English vocabulary was evidently linked to her idea of education and even though it went against Save's idea of appropriate adult literacy (Save encouraged the use of the words "facilitator" and "participant" in Nepali rather than "teacher" and "student"), she could not stop code switching. The women responded by calling her "Miss", the English word used for women teachers in the schools, showing they were also aware of the school language. I noticed that some English words (in Nepali script) appeared in the adult literacy course primer (e.g. nursery, office) though there are Nepali translations. Thus the ideal of using Nepali or mother tongues for teaching within adult classes was not straightforward, given the background (and English education) of many of the facilitators and staff writing the primers. Although the organisation seemed to have a model of *pure* Nepali language, in practice, facilitators, trainers and course book writers used code switching unintentionally.

Thus the language policy within Save as an organisation - to use English for office communication - influenced the language used in their field programme, including in the literacy classes and training courses where their stated policy was to use Nepali or local languages. The language policy cannot be seen as fixed with certain outcomes, but as one influence on a process where other factors (in this case, the facilitator's educational background) also come together to determine how and when certain languages are used.

HIL

In HIL, the local NGO, there was more (unspoken) tension within the organisation over which language was to be used when. Compared to Save, the language policy - particularly regarding the literacy classes - seemed to be quite ad hoc and not planned. This meant in practice that there was more ongoing discussion over which language to use and that the women attending classes were encouraged to influence or dispute the choice of language. I frequently observed classes where the women would demand that the facilitator spoke Newari not Nepali, though they wanted to read and write in Nepali. The following extract from my fieldnotes illustrates how the class switched between Newari and Nepali according to the objective of the lesson (whether a language exercise or discussion of issues in this case):

Kamal started by asking what bahulaha ('mad' in Nepali) means. No reply. So he answered himself. Nagina (the HIL supervisor) said to him he should do it in Newari and she asked the girls the same question in Newari. Immediately they all started talking about mad people they have seen.

Kamal: (in Nepali) So everyone has seen them. They say the witch has broken them in the village, don't they - they are bewitched. Now how would you describe the behaviour of mad people? Ours is 'normal' (using English word), isn't it, what is theirs?

Girls reply in Newari.

Kamal: Yes, they say the same thing over and over again at any time of the day. And what kinds of clothes do they wear?

Girls (all making suggestions, very animated, lively in Newari) : dirty clothes

Kamal: Whatever they find they will eat, whatever they find they will wear

The girls all discuss in Newari about mad people they have seen, laughing and calling out to Kamal.

Kamal: Have you seen that mad woman in Patan? Sometimes they even wear no clothes. (All the girls giggle).

Nagina tells a story in Newari about how in Thecho a mad woman even took all the clothes that were thrown away from a dead person and put them in her room.

Kamal: You see, they can't think properly. If they think very deeply about one thing, they will go mad. Now you know what 'mad' (bahulaha) is.

Bina: Say it again, we don't know.

Girl: We say they have got boksi (witch, spirit)

Kamal: But we medical people say that medicine will make them better, not the dhami (faithhealer). If you give medicine when they start to go mad, they will get better. But they won't get better if you leave it a long time. That's why today we are learning that if we see a little symptom of madness, we should take them to the hospital immediately. Now have you seen the three mad people in Sanagow?

Kamal began this lesson in Nepali and it was not until the girls were given permission to speak Newari (by the HIL supervisor, Nagina) that the discussion became animated and they related stories that they had heard about mad people. Even at this stage, Kamal continued to speak Nepali (he had said earlier that he wanted them to practise Nepali) but after this discussion, he decided to use Newari :

Kamal starts speaking Newari. Then switches to Nepali again: "in the future, you will be asked what is madness, what are the reasons and how can you help the family, can you write this now? Maybe we should speak Newari, it's faster."

They all speak in Newari.

Kamal: Say it now in Newari, we did it already in Nepali. He tries to say it in Newari but keeps going into Nepali because of the technical language, then ends up saying Nepali instead. Gives a summary of his discussion:

Madness is not a ghost or a god or a witch coming, it is a mental illness and the persons should be taken to hospital. He gives examples - 'love tragedy' (in English) or if you think too much, for example when studying. (They all laugh as one woman has gone to sleep).

Fieldnotes : 21/12/95, Sanagow (HIL)

Like my earlier example of Devendra trying to conduct a Nepali session on LGM, it seemed that Kamal was unable to present his lesson on madness in Newari. Although his mother tongue is Newari, he has followed a health course in Nepali (and English) and he finds it difficult to translate the topic into Newari. The girls at the literacy class do not feel inhibited by him speaking Nepali and in response to his questions in Nepali, join in with animated Newari. This lesson illustrates how easily classes switched between the two languages and that facilitators were encouraged to use Newari for discussion and explanations, even if reading and writing was conducted in Nepali. Code switching was thus used in more the sense described by Gumperz, of a consensus of meaning between insiders of a certain ethnic group, and it was a strategy that worked well educationally.

What was surprising to me, since there is a standardised form of written Nepali, was that the staff held the same flexible attitude towards how Nepali words should be written (as towards the spoken form). Following this session on madness, I attended a training session for the facilitators where Nagina discussed how they had written the word bahulaha (madness). Although this was the key word for the week which they were to teach their classes, there had been no prior discussion as to how to write the word and several facilitators had spelt it in different ways. The confusion arose because the word is pronounced differently as "bola" unlike most Nepali words which are pronounced as they are spelt. One facilitator had even used the word pagul, a less colloquial word for madness, instead of bahulaha. Rather than saying that one way of writing bahulaha was right or wrong, Nagina and the other supervisors discussed which version should be used in the reading passage that they were preparing for this week. Although there are standardised ways of writing Nepali words, I often observed this kind of discussion - a critical approach to literacy - at the weekly training sessions, as everyone seemed to believe that it was a matter of negotiating and agreeing which way words should be written. There was no sense of hierarchy and facilitators would challenge the way that the supervisors

had written certain words or sentences. This process could be compared to Ghose and Bhog's (1994:5) account of how a hand pump newsletter written by neo-literate women in a "creative fusion of Hindi with the local language Bundeli" - whereas these women debated how to write down a previously unwritten dialect, the HIL facilitators and staff were discussing how to write Nepali, the standard national language.

This attitude towards language, which could be compared to Fairclough's (1996) "critical language awareness in language education", contrasted greatly with Save where language was associated with hierarchy - both within the organisation and between the office staff and the villagers. In HIL, language was not a given fixed object that they had to accept, but a medium to dispute and change if necessary. In HIL's advanced classes, they had begun to teach English, in response to demand from the women. They had evolved a way of teaching English based on the Nepali alphabet which had the effect of changing the pronunciation of certain words, because of assumptions about how certain letters are pronounced in Nepali. This extract from my field notes describes a training session when the facilitators were shown how to teach their class participants to write their names in English:

> *The first lesson was called "English name writing method" (in Nepali) and consisted of a sheet with all the Nepali letters with their English phonetic equivalent*[21]*. The idea was that the participants could learn to write their names in English through finding the equivalent of each letter. Nagina gave an example (in Nepali) on the blackboard:*
>
> *ofd'gf(Yamuna)*
>
> *She broke the Nepali word down into letters, then the letters into the English equivalent letters:*
>
> *e.g. d' += d\ ++ p = M+U =MU*

[21] See Appendix V for copy of this sheet

She explained the logic, then asked "how do you write half letters?"

She wrote gSsnL on the blackboard, then:

s\ = K s = s\ + c = Ka

nL = n\ + Of = Lee

Everyone was silent during her explanations and looked as if the whole process was quite bewildering. Then she asked "Bujyo?" (do you understand?) and they replied in chorus, "Bujyo" (understood).

Fieldnotes: 28/10/95, Tikkathali (HIL)

Although Nepali words (being syllabic) can be written in differing ways in Roman script (for example, h'[on the lesson sheet could have been written as Ju rather than Joo), the HIL staff had decided to standardise it so that they could make English teaching like a fixed maths formula which the girls could memorise. They even used plus and equal signs to break the Nepali words down into units that could be written in Roman script, and vice versa. This process did initially involve discussion and disputes over how each unit should be written, but once agreed, everyone kept to the same rules. My transliteration of certain English words into Nepali script turned out to be different from theirs - but no one said I was "wrong", just "different". I did however observe one lesson where the health assistant (who had not been involved in the writing of the literacy course) disputed the way that the staff had written Pneumonia phonetically in Nepali script as "Nimonia" rather than "Nyumonia". The literacy staff defended their version by saying it was based on the limited number of Nepali letters that the participants had learnt in the course up until now: "Nyu-monia" would involve learning the compound letter "Nyu".

Within HIL as an organisation, language policy was not stated explicitly as in Save, but there was general consensus that Nepali should be used for written communications. However the hierarchical structure of the organisation as a whole (the literacy programme was just one element of a larger health programme with a team of medical doctors who were the directors) meant differing views over spoken language. The team who run the literacy programme were all Newari speaking, unlike the doctors, and their flexible attitude towards which language was used in the classes was not shared by the doctors. When the doctors came on an inspection tour of the literacy classes, they commented that Newari should not be used in the classroom - the reason they gave was that they could not follow the discussion taking place! The idea of Newari threatening the doctors' status came up again at a picnic organised by HIL at the end of the literacy course. The picnic comprised of formal speech giving by the HIL staff, facilitators and women participants:

Rajan [supervisor] seemed to be the person doing the introductions and he first asked the HIL director, a doctor, to start. He refused, saying Rajendra [organiser of the literacy programme] should. All the women were sitting on mats in an L shape and the doctors standing in a line in front. Rajendra started speaking in Nepali, saying that as the majority of people here spoke Newari, he would speak in Newari. The doctors didn't look too pleased (several are Brahmin) so Rajendra laughed and then began in Nepali.

Fieldnotes: 13/2/96, Thankot picnic (HIL)

Rajendra realised that he would be going too far to actually begin speaking in Newari at this event, but the fact that he turned the possibility into a joke - though reminding Newari speakers that they were in the majority - presented a clear message to the doctors in charge. Rajendra and his team of supervisors were aware that Newari language was one strategy they could use to challenge the hierarchy within HIL. They justified the use of Newari on educational grounds and realised this was their advantage over the doctors who had problems communicating with Newari speaking health workers in the project. I attended a health training on Pregnancy given by one of the doctors where she tried hard to encourage the girls (who were desperately shy) to speak:

Doctor: Everyone should speak, not just one person. Are you not speaking because you are bored or because you don't know? (in Nepali)

Sharda: Stomach ache (in Nepali)

Doctor : You all know these things. What do you say in Newari for 'period pain'? You can speak in Newari if you like (No reply).

Fieldnotes: 10/11/95, Tikkathali (HIL)

The doctor's status as an outsider who prefers to speak Nepali makes it difficult for her to stimulate the kind of discussion that the HIL literacy workers can, despite her well-meaning efforts. She draws attention to their language differences by asking how to translate "period pain". In the earlier class on madness, Nagina similarly suggested that the girls talked in Newari, but as she herself preferred to speak Newari, it was a completely different step from the doctor's. Although they both decided to switch to Newari for educational reasons (for more discussion), in Nagina's case, there was the feeling that she too would be more free to talk if the discussion was in Newari. In the class on Madness, she also contributed with stories in Newari. Nagina had an additional teaching strategy in that she could code-switch between Newari and Nepali to aid the participants' understanding.

Though Newari and Nepali were sources of power and conflict within HIL as an organisation, there appeared to be general consensus about how Nepali and Newari should be used in an educational context. Although the organisers told me that the course had originally been developed in Newari (but that the women had wanted to learn Nepali), once I began to observe the classes regularly, it became clear that the situation was not this simple and that there was a generational bias to the choice of language. The older married women, who were generally in the minority, were the ones who were keen to speak in Newari and as the reading passages in Nepali became more complex, they were the first to drop out of the class. Unlike the younger girls who had learnt some Nepali in the carpet factories, the older women were unable to speak Nepali and when they tried to answer questions in Nepali at the classes, the facilitator, younger girls and even the HIL supervisors would laugh at their attempts! A few persevered with trying to learn Nepali but most gave up after a couple of months. The more usual assumption that "drop out" is due to "lack of motivation" clearly fails to take account of women's varying needs according to age, including language choices as here. The facilitators were aware of the difficulty of trying to meet these differing needs within their classes, but ended up just teaching the literacy skills to the younger girls, rather than the oral language skills to the older women. Once the older women dropped out, the classes were easier to run. The HIL organisers did not appear to respond to the problem, but in their discussions still talked about what "the women" wanted, rather than considering the differing needs of the two age groups. The above analysis shows how language policy within these two organisations contrasted or even conflicted with decisions about how language was used within the literacy classes. The staff in the two organisations and the women participants held differing views about language, formed partly by the structure of the organisation, their own background and the ways in which languages are used in the local area. The next section looks at how language policy can be influenced by and itself influences more directly how the organisation approaches gender issues through literacy.

Gender and language policy

I had not considered the teaching of English to be a gender issue until I began to observe the English lessons at the HIL literacy classes and discuss with the women participants why they wanted to learn English. As with questions like "why do you want to read and write?", I was first given the functional reasons: to read doctors' prescriptions, to read the English numbers on the carpet weaving maps, to read the English colour names on the wool and to sign their names on the salary sheet. The HIL staff also told me the reasons why they had started teaching English were so that the women could read signboards like "Hospital" in English or room numbers in English when they go to Kathmandu. In fact, in all these examples, there was no real need for the women to learn English - they could do carpet weaving by following symbols rather than reading the numbers, find their way around by visual cues and they could sign their names in

Nepali on the salary sheets. Once I started talking to the women, they insisted that they wanted to learn English because "everyone is learning English these days". The young girls in particular, whose brothers went to the English boarding schools, were aware that to speak English and to sign their names in English gave them status. Yates (1994: 281) similarly suggests from her research in Ghana that the reason many women wanted to learn in English rather than the vernacular was that for them "being educated was synonymous with being able to understand English". However her research revealed that there were also functional reasons for the women wanting to learn English in this area of Ghana. The situation in Sanagow was very different, since only a minority of the older women did want to learn English for purely functional reasons - so that they could help their children with their boarding school homework.

In the literacy classes, a lot of emphasis was therefore placed on reading and writing each others' names and the young girls in particular were always keen to practise. I never heard any English conversation in the classes - probably because the facilitators relied on a mechanical way of teaching English like maths formulae, as described earlier. The idea of English as a status symbol rather than needing it to communicate was shared by many in the community, including the boarding school staff. I visited Ananta Boarding School in Sanagow and the headmaster showed me the report forms that they send home in English every week. The parents were to read the forms and sign to show that they approved. I expressed surprise that so many parents could understand the English (knowing that several women at the literacy classes sent their children to boarding school) and the headmaster laughed. He said many parents could not even sign their names in Nepali but did a thumb print so what was the hope of them understanding English. The report forms and the public school style English magazines that were sent home were more symbolic of the difference between this kind of school and the government schools, of the opportunities that an English education was supposed to offer afterwards : the difference between "boarding" English and "bazaar" English.

I decided to discuss the differences between schools in the area with women at a literacy class, using picture cards made by them to compare two institutions at a time (see Appendix II). This activity gave me an insight into how far they considered language a major issue when not asked directly. The first major difference that the women mentioned between the government school and Ananta Boarding was the language medium : "Ananta is good for afterwards because they teach so much English." As well as language, the quality of education offered was the other main way that they distinguished between the schools. When comparing the government school and their adult class, they all laughed and said that they were very different because the teachers are no good in the school. Similarly, the Ananta Boarding school was considered comparable to the adult class because "we go every day and still learn something". The women's comments showed that the boarding school education was valued for its quality (teachers' and students' regularity) as much as the English medium and that through the adult class, they felt they were also getting access to a similar quality education.

Although the functional aspect of English language learning was less important to participants, the facilitators had a differing perspective. In discussion, it became apparent that

the health training they received from HIL - which they valued as a potential career opportunity - was often training in English. They learnt to write case histories of patients in English at sessions given by the doctors. Sharda, a facilitator who had previously been a class participant so had only basic English, said she had to give up doing the volunteer health work for HIL as she could not read and write the drug names in English. Thus at a certain level, it was apparent that English led to job opportunities within HIL's health programme. Although the facilitators (all women) saw this as an opportunity to get out of the house and obtain paid work, all of them had been working on a purely voluntary basis at HIL clinics and did not yet have any prospect of a salaried job.

In Save, unlike HIL, English was not seen as a need that should be met by the literacy programme. Though I came across several instances where participants told me they needed to learn English (e.g. a low caste man who had been trained in veterinary skills and now needed more English to read medicine names), the staff seemed to feel that this lay outside the realm of adult literacy. When I insisted that other programmes had considered teaching English, they were surprised that adult women could learn English at that age and did not see that English teaching could be relevant to their women's programme. Ironically, some of the demand for English was generated by Save as an organisation introducing English development terms into the communities. This extract from a training session given by Save staff to women's group leaders on how to write reports, shows that the women wanted to learn to write English, but that Ramesh, the Save "motivator", was unwilling to teach them :

Ramesh explains that he will be teaching them how to take minutes so that they won't forget what is said in meetings. But first he will teach them how to write letters.

Ramesh: Must put the date on or you won't know when it was sent.

He writes the date, asking "what month is it?"

Women: Nine

Dil: Don't we need to know what day it is?

Ramesh: Now write whoever you are writing to, Field Co-ordinator (English word) or whatever, but you don't have to write English words, but you can write English words in Nepali.

Women: We need to learn the English words too.

Ramesh writes : Save USA, Arughat, Gorkha (in Nepali script), saying "you need to know your own office address. It is a good idea to put an individual's name or it can get lost".

Fieldnotes: 10/1/96, Arughat (Save)

The women's desire to learn English - they may see English as being appropriate for writing letters to Save office - is not taken seriously in this situation. The fact that the women do not press Ramesh any further is perhaps because of their formal relationship with him as a trainer and as a man (in HIL classes, the facilitators are young girls from the same community and similar backgrounds to the literacy participants - so they tend to have a more informal relationship). However, the women may also be aware of their position as "villagers" and Ramesh as "Save staff" and that English is one of the distinguishing features between them. As in my earlier example of Sahana talking about the "field" to a village woman, the use of English within the office hierarchy creates a barrier between the office and the villages and is also a source of status. Although Save as an organisation was keen to promote bottom-up development and gender awareness amongst the staff, they did not perceive language (or more specifically, English) as a relevant issue. It was only after I had stayed in Arughat that I too realised what a radical step HIL had taken by teaching English in women's literacy classes.

The following event in Arutar made me realise in what ways the introduction of English into the Save literacy classes could also help challenge the existing gender balance of power. We were attending a meeting of the village forestry committee: there were seventeen men sitting in a circle on the street outside our house and four women sitting observing from the edge on a separate mat:

Urmila was the only woman who joined in the discussion, following it avidly and discussing vehemently. I asked her why there were only men on the committee. I was amazed at the women's response (considering they were in front of all the men). Dev Maya and she both started telling me loudly how until a year ago they couldn't even listen to the discussions as they do now and that it is because in this village women are nothing. Now after the literacy class Urmila said, they have one woman on the committee (she was sitting listening at the side).

Bikram, the village politician, turned round and said no, there were two: one representative from each women's group. "Chinimaya is supposed to come from Majhigow". Buddhi's brother turned round and laughed, saying "we have one woman here but look she doesn't speak, what's the point?" I said, "how can she speak if there is one woman and seventeen men? How would you feel alone in a group of women?" I asked why they don't have half/half ratio of men to women. Bikram turned round again and said to me in English this time, "the problem in this society is that the women are backward and weak". I asked him (in English) why then, as village leader, he didn't try to bring them forward. He didn't reply and someone else said to him in Nepali, "are you trying to learn English?"

The women told me they have their own group, formed after the literacy class, and it was only after a lot of persuasion they managed to send one woman to sit on the committee. I asked if they had asked for more seats - "what's the point", said

Dev Maya, "they don't give us any. They don't want women here". Bikram got up and moved over the other side of the circle, leaving our discussion.

Fieldnotes: 13/1/96, Arutar (Save)

Bikram switched to speaking in English to say that the "women are backward and weak" as if to prove his point : the women could no longer join in the discussion as they had been doing once he spoke English. He could also use English to exclude me from the definition of backward Nepali women, since I understood his language. It was a clever move and one that brought the women's vehement discussion of their low status to an end and provoked me to be more open with my own views on gender. This event shows how English could be used as a source of power, though ironically the men present ridiculed Bikram as "trying to learn English" since it was so out of place and the older men could not follow the conversation. Bikram used code switching to "probe for shared background knowledge" (Gumperz, ibid.) with me as an English speaker, but also for the opposite function, to distance himself from the Nepali speaking women.

I have highlighted this event to show how language issues are so closely involved with gender roles and status, and also to suggest that Save literacy planners failed to see language as a gender issue. The English speaking institutions (boarding schools, government offices) were associated with men. Save was the exception but the units involved with women (literacy, productivity) used Nepali. To introduce English to the literacy programme as HIL has done, would challenge the current gender division of language within institutions, such as women's groups, in Save's programme area.

Conclusion

By looking at language in the context of gender roles, I have returned to the idea raised initially through Hikmat's health education lesson : social and political tensions being played out through the way language is used. Hikmat used English in his lesson to demonstrate his authority and dominated the women; yet HIL facilitators teaching English in the different situation of a literacy class and with different methods, proved to be an empowering situation for the girls concerned. The importance of understanding how these complex processes take place - considering multiple approaches to language within one setting which all influence any formulated language policy - has been demonstrated by the data in this chapter.

The literacy planners' policies on language were transformed in practice by women participants' views on the links between literacy and development. Whereas Save planners saw mother tongue and Nepali literacy teaching as helping women to participate more fully in group development activities like income generating, the women themselves were aware of a different

kind of development (from which they were excluded) associated with English literacy and Save as an organisation. In HIL, planners had introduced Nepali and English teaching to Newari speakers, since they shared the women's views that Newari literacy was not linked to development or enhanced self-esteem. Various factors such as how language is viewed by participants, facilitators and staff, the relationship between facilitator and class, the social background of the participants and the organisational structure, determine how far the women participants can influence language policy within their own literacy classes.

An ethnographic approach to research can reveal how language choices are made in practice and how these relate or conflict with the stated language policy, thus extending the scope of language planning to include, for example in these cases, language sensitivity training for staff to enable them to respond to the needs of participants that vary according to their age and situation. Rather than trying to impose a policy based on a concept of *pure language*, facilitators can be encouraged to see code-switching as a positive strategy to use in bilingual situations and develop a more "critical language awareness" in their classrooms. Only then can agencies like Save and HIL begin to work out how language policy can be used as an empowering force within a specific setting. In order to link literacy with development, planners need to explore more about how certain literacies and languages are identified with different kinds of development by women of varying backgrounds. Language policy can then reflect ideological as well as technical or functional concerns.

CHAPTER FIVE

Alina, a Save class facilitator, runs the adult literacy class in Arutar school each night: school children come with their mothers to provide company on the path home

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NEW OR OLD LITERACY? APPROACHES TO LITERACY AND NUMERACY TEACHING

Introduction

When writing my research proposal, I was optimistic that I could identify as my case studies two literacy programmes with contrasting approaches to literacy teaching. Although I realised it would be difficult to find a programme that was *purely* Freirean or *purely* functional, I did think there would be some characteristics that would be generalisable in these terms. However in the end, rather than looking for projects with apparently contrasting approaches (such as traditional versus radical), I found that it was more useful to identify other ways in which the projects contrasted (organisational base, staff, geographical area, language) as all these factors influenced in practice how the stated approach to literacy was interpreted. The general terms such as 'functional literacy approach' are more helpful as conceptual tools to explore and analyse literacy practices in the programmes, rather than as a basis of difference.

Beginning from the assumption that it is impossible to describe a literacy programme with a single label, I consider here instead how and why the various approaches or ideologies have become fused together. Though much of the literature on literacy programmes in developing countries (e.g. Parajuli and Enslin, 1990, who describe a "Freirean" programme in Nepal) has suggested that it is possible to identify a coherence in approach, this may well be a result of the nature of research undertaken, often using quantitative methods. An ethnographic approach can reveal the contradictions implicit in trying to use such labels: the previous experiences of trainers, facilitators and students, the immediate conditions of teaching and learning and the organisational structure of the programme influence how literacy is taught in practice and the meaning that is attached to the labels.

Untangling the approaches

In Chapter 3, I outlined various approaches to literacy, with the idea that they might be a useful tool for analysing the process of literacy learning and teaching. My objective in describing the models of literacy used implicitly as well as explicitly by researchers and planners, was to present a theoretical framework for analysing how participants and facilitators "take hold" of these models. The contrasting backgrounds, objectives and philosophies of facilitators, planners

and researchers may mean that literacy approaches in practice look very different from in theory. The following account illustrates the difficulty of characterising a particular programme in terms of one identifiable approach to literacy:

Devendra, Education Specialist at Save Arughat Office, is running a training programme for facilitators of the advanced literacy classes. The session described below was on the "Situational Analysis of Adults", based on guidelines from a training manual produced by the regional Save office in this area of Nepal. All materials and dialogue were in Nepali language, unless otherwise stated.

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He asked the participants their ages, then wrote three of them on the blackboard, added 225 (representing the total ages of the class) and added it all together. The first man whose age he asked replied 38 and Devendra was quite taken aback, asking him again if he was sure. I notice he didn't use this man's age as he was assuming they would all be much younger[22]*. Next he told them to think how much older than themselves the average adult literacy class participants are. "Who knows more - the facilitator or the students?" "The adult literacy class" was the reply - as they have 200 years more experience of life. Devendra - "so we should not say that the adult literacy participants know nothing".*

Devendra then put the objectives of an adult literacy class on cards (i.e. his prepared ones in academic Nepali which no-one understood) and he asked what they all meant. The students had to match which of the cards fitted the objectives that they had written in everyday Nepali. I noticed they were a bit cynical today and when Devendra said "learnt things will be fresh", someone muttered, "like bread"[23]*.*

Devendra asked everyone to close their eyes and think "how you were before studying in an adult literacy class". Most of the participants said, "we didn't ever go to an adult class, we went to school". Devendra told them to imagine they had. Then he divided them into three groups by numbering 1,2,3 and he put three questions on different "newsprints" (sheets of large paper) in the three rooms. The questions were [translated from Nepali]:

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[22] The others were all in their late teens or early twenties.

[23] The Nepali word for "fresh" which Dirgha uses is more usually used for food, than in the abstract sense that he intends.

1. How were they (adults) before studying in the basic literacy class?

2. After the basic literacy class, what were they like?

3. Tomorrow, after studying in the advanced class, what will they be like?

Each group had to note down points under 'their' question for 15 minutes, then they had 5 minutes to read the others' answers and the chance to add or change the points that they had written. Devendra was a bit irritated as they were slow picking up this activity and at first everyone wrote simply "uneducated" [in Nepali] as the answer to question one. (He also had to correct their spelling of the word 'uneducated'). Later other ideas emerged: lack of community feeling, no discipline, poor health. After the class, adults can: keep the house clean, make a toilet, speak about development. Most groups just wrote on the flip charts and did not spend much time on discussion as they were keen to get the writing finished. It struck me that they would probably be able to remember points without writing them down and get more out of discussing points verbally only (one of the messages of the training may be that literacy is needed to think analytically...). Devendra told them to stop writing when the time was up and the man who was writing refused, saying "how can I not write their last point down?"

In the feedback session, Alina, the only woman, was nominated by her group and it was quite painful to watch as she was so reluctant to go to the blackboard and she hid her face in her shawl. When she got to the board, she stood in silence, fiddling with her shawl while the others went on about women's development and how could she ever encourage her female students to speak. Devendra was very good at supporting her however and ignored these comments. She explained the meanings of the various points on the flip chart, <u>anusarshan</u> (discipline/ control) being her favourite: they (illiterates) smoke, just do what they fancy, go anywhere, drink, don't wash, fight in the village for small things, not know when is the right time to do things. As for 'uneducated', her definition centred around not knowing the letters, but she went on to say that they know (if literate) that when they have a headache, they should take medicine rather than slaughtering a chicken to please the gods. Other benefits of literacy included "more knowledge of different castes" as they all sit together in literacy classes. In the question session, one man said that he disagreed - even educated people still play cards and gamble, not just illiterates. I could not follow the answer properly (given by other participants) but it centred on the fact that women drink more alcohol than men at festivals and that is because they are the least educated.

Other benefits of going to adult literacy classes were learning to speak better and learning to do social work. A point about learning to play games was "cut" by one group who said even children know how to play games (not just educated

people). Devendra suggested that they should consider what kind of game we are talking about as it may be a maths game. So they voted to keep the point and the other groups said "right lagayeko" (ticked right) as if the suggestion had Devendra's seal of approval. Another point was "know about teaching their children".

The last presenter (male) was also very shy and they teased him too. Devendra asked him, "how will you teach if you are shy here?" and told him "training means learning to teach". The others laughed when he started but Devendra kept putting his arm around him and urging him on. Summing up, Devendra said, this is what we should give our participants after six months (everything on the blackboard). "What was this school before it was built?" Participants : "A jungle". Devendra - "We compared before and after: black and white letters looked the same before we learnt how to study. We need a curriculum to teach these things. For example, if we want to go from Arkhet to Machhekhola, what do we need?" Students - "money, bridge". Devendra - "so we need an adult education centre to teach literacy".

Fieldnotes: 14/10/95: Arughat (Save)

I have chosen this extract as it shows a clear contrast between the imported Western methods and ideology and more traditional pedagogical assumptions. In Devendra's opening activity, adding the participants' ages to show the amount of experience in an adult class, we can see influences of a learner-centred approach to literacy. Devendra echoes Freire's message that adults are not "empty vessels" and that the facilitators should build on and respect their longer experience. Devendra's training techniques (such as adding their ages rather than just telling a number) seem to belong to a participatory approach to teaching, but he is still very much in control of the knowledge. He chooses to ignore the older man's age as it might ruin the intended message of the activity. He continues in this contradictory manner: he wants to appear to be using the participants' discussion and experiences, but is also keen to ensure that they end up with the right answer. The trainees recognise this and even say "ticked right" after discussing about whether learning to play games could be considered a benefit of adult literacy (when Devendra has shown his support for this point). At times Devendra is so concerned to get his message across, he seems to forget who the trainees are: they have to remind him that they could not imagine the time before they studied in an adult class as they had all been to school instead.

Devendra uses participatory learning methods, such as flip charts, cards, group discussion, rather than a lecture-based session, but without affecting the more hierarchical relationship of teacher with class that was the norm in this area. The trainees respond by behaving as if they were in school - muttering sarcastic comments ("fresh like bread"), feeling shy to speak (Alina covers her mouth with her shawl) and rushing through the tasks. In the literacy practices within the session, Devendra shows how his assumptions about literacy contrast with practices such as LGM which the facilitators are supposed to encourage in their literacy classes. Devendra

matches his prepared cards written in academic Nepali to the objectives that the trainees have written in simple Nepali, asserting his authority (in a similar way to Hikmat in Chapter 4) through his superior knowledge of Nepali and development terminology. The exercise then becomes a language task, the focus taken away from the discussion of the purpose of adult literacy. The message is that there is one acceptable literacy in the classroom - though Devendra accepts their spoken explanations, written signs should be in H register Nepali (he also corrects their spelling before displaying their writing).

The three questions that Devendra puts up (asking what the adults will be like before and after the literacy class) assume the "great divide" (Goody, ibid.) between literates and illiterates, belonging to an autonomous model of literacy. The trainees do not immediately make the connection which Devendra intends between literacy and moral improvement, saying just "uneducated" but eventually they come out with the points about literate people doing community work, speaking better, being more disciplined and healthier. I look in more detail at this development ideology in Chapter 6, but here it is enough to note that there is some dissent: one man contends that educated people also play cards and gamble, yet he is silenced by the other trainees who are keen to reinforce the overall message that literates are better people. Street's (1987) point about the "colonising" effect of Western literacy, the values that are also imported with the dominant literacy, can be seen in the comments that literate people are more likely to turn to Western medicine when they are sick.

In Devendra's concluding comment, "we need an adult literacy centre to teach literacy", he makes more explicit his assumptions related to the "schooling of literacy" (Street and Street, 1991). His use of cards written in H register Nepali (the register used in school texts) conveys the message that the written variety is different and superior to spoken L register Nepali. In the session overall, we can see a contradiction between the training methods which emphasise oral discussion, and Devendra's own belief that spoken Nepali is inferior to the written form. So, even in the group discussions, most of the time is spent summarising the points in written form for later presentation. Devendra does not recognise the fact that the facilitators are more used to discussing points from memory, but insists they write everything down. One of the messages he puts across through his teaching methods (perhaps unconsciously) is that literacy is needed to think analytically.

To anyone who entered Devendra's training session, it would seem at first glance that he followed a participatory approach to literacy, drawing on teaching methods associated with the New Literacy (Willinsky, 1990) : the class would frequently break into groups and the visual aids were prepared by the trainees themselves. Echoes of Freire were even heard in the class. However, the underlying message was that even within groups, the emphasis should be on written rather than oral mediums of discussion and that academic Nepali was superior to other forms of writing. The idea that literacy has a "civilising" effect was encouraged in discussion and that the only place to learn adult literacy is in an adult literacy centre. Although the purpose of the session, as outlined in the trainers' manual, was to discuss the idea that adults need to be taught differently from children and have experience to draw upon, Devendra's own relationship

with the class and his beliefs about the difference between "illiterates" and "literates" gave a contradictory message. The teaching process contradicted the intended content of this session. The above analysis demonstrates the difficulty of identifying the approach that a literacy programme has adopted. As this one training session shows, a variety of approaches have influenced how Devendra views literacy and the training methods he uses. What detailed ethnographic research allows us to do is to observe this process in the classroom, the way in which methods like LGM may be transformed in practice and what this tells us about the kind of literacy practices being encouraged through a particular programme. This could be seen as teaching methods becoming divorced from the methodology to which they originally belonged. In this chapter, I will be looking in more detail at how specific methods, mostly derived from the New Literacy approach, were used in the classrooms I observed. Rather than bemoaning the fact that LGM is not being used "correctly", I look at the reasons for the changes I describe. Analysing the "new meaning" that individuals develop (Fullan, 1991) and how the kinds of literacy practices link with differing ideologies of development should enable us to see the implications for programme planning.

The New Literacy : from school to adult class

Since both Save's and HIL's literacy programmes appeared to draw on teaching methods and terminology associated with the New Literacy developed in Western schools (as Devendra's training session illustrated), I will discuss more generally the school origins of this movement before going on to look at how the methods have been used in practice in adult literacy classes. The term *New Literacy* can itself be misleading since it carries different meanings in research, planning and teaching contexts. I need to distinguish here between the theoretical models of the 'new literacy studies' used by researchers (and an indication of my own theoretical position), and that of the New Literacy as a teaching method.

There has been a tendency to assume that a critical approach to literacy research (NLS) will lead to development of certain teaching approaches, such as whole language. Although this is not a necessary consequence, nevertheless "there is a sense in which a social view of literacy entails a social view of learning and a sensitivity to context and the social relations of context, including those between the facilitator and the learner" (Street, 1997). I took this perspective in my introductory analysis of Devendra's training session, where the New Literacy could be seen at one level as a "colonising" literacy practice. From a planner's viewpoint, Rogers (1994b) discusses the implications that the new literacy research approach has for literacy programmes, suggesting that "there can be no one form of literacy (and post-literacy) provision which will be universally applicable" (Rogers, 1994b: 47). I will be taking my analysis a step further from Rogers, to look at teaching methods in adult classrooms in relation to new literacy approaches as articulated in planning and research contexts.

The New Literacy teaching approaches were first developed in Western schools. Willinsky's account of Canadian classroom teaching (1990) can provide a basis for analysing how these methods change in meaning and face different constraints when transposed to a non formal education context and to different countries. There were two key influences behind the development of the New Literacy approach in schools : the first being changing assumptions about the relative values of written and oral mediums, the relationship of reader to the text and the idea of multiple literacies (an ideological approach to literacy). The other influence that Willinsky links with the new approach is Illich's "deschooling" movement where the emphasis was on changing the hierarchical relationship of teacher to students, considering learning as not bounded by the classroom. Literacy practices in many UK and USA classrooms thus changed dramatically in the '70s and '80s. Rather than considering reading as a matter of mastering rules, such as phonics, the whole language approach called for "a reading that is driven by a search for meaning rather than a skill" (ibid.: 77). The "importance of the knowledge a reader brings to the page" (ibid.) is stressed in what Willinsky terms the *top-down model*[24] which starts with the sense of the text. The *bottom-up model* stresses by contrast the "mastery of skills in sequence". My analysis of literacy classes in Nepal will show that the two models of reading need not necessarily be in conflict, as Willinsky suggests, and as they are at a political level in the USA and the UK.

In so far as the New Literacy teaching approach posed a political challenge to traditional relationships between teachers and children, between students and texts, several issues arose in the Canadian context that could not easily be resolved in practice (Willinsky, 1990). Though the teacher accepted that the children were able to guide and determine the curriculum within the classroom, an unsolved dilemma was how far she should intervene or attempt to influence them when their writing appeared to be sex stereotyped or indulged in continuous violence. Another issue was that of testing and standardisation of language - the relationship of students to teacher and the approach that resisted "standardising" their written texts meant that it was not appropriate to test New Literacy by conventional standards. The question arose as to whether the New Literacy was "misleading students", "setting them up for a world that does not exist" (ibid.: 82). In the Nepal adult literacy programmes, these issues also greatly influenced how teachers chose to use methods from the New Literacy.

Many of the principles that Willinsky outlined in relation to schools can be seen in the adult literacy context : the concept of workshops, learners writing their own texts, learners referred to as "participants" rather than students, the importance of reading materials that are relevant to life and culturally appropriate. Rogers' (1994b) account is useful to identify how these principles and methods have shaped a new approach to adult literacy teaching and programming. LGM (Learner Generated Materials or Locally Generated Materials), for example,

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[24] I have chosen to use the terms *top-down* and *bottom-up* even though in a development planning context they carry opposing meanings of 'imposition' versus 'participation'. The polarisation that Willinsky suggests by using the terms is useful to retain in the context of my argument of 'traditional' versus Western/ modern teaching approaches.

is based on the idea of workshops where learners create their own texts. However, apart from Willinsky's more philosophical ideal of changing learners' relationships to texts, LGM in adult literacy programmes has often fulfilled a practical need for cheap, culturally appropriate materials in local languages. Rogers (1999) also points to the relationship between literacy learnt in a school (or adult class) environment and literacy practices outside, discussing a "real literacies" approach which has both planning (agencies begin with development activities, rather than a literacy class) and pedagogical implications. Thus the New Literacy in Willinsky's schools and in the development programmes I describe needs to be distinguished in relation to the institutions' goals and constraints. The New Literacy of HIL and Save can be seen as part of a wider development planning strategy: to link literacy and other sectoral activities more directly and to reduce programme costs, rather than simply a more effective teaching method or a philosophy of teaching and learning.

As a teaching method introduced to Western schools, the New Literacy challenged the traditional hierarchical relationship of teacher to student, written to oral modes of expression, academic text to pupils' writing. In Nepal, adult literacy programmes have been influenced by teaching methods from the New Literacy movement, such as whole language, as well as the ideals of making the classroom more learner-centred and relevant to students' everyday lives. The New Literacy Studies provides a way of researching the New Literacy methods as social processes in the differing contexts of Western schools and Nepali adult literacy classes.

Save USA and HIL : the New or Old Literacy?

Drawing on concepts from the New Literacy Studies, I will focus here on the cultural, social and political dimensions of introducing the New Literacy teaching approaches to the adult literacy programmes of HIL and Save. Though I analyse how staff and participants translated New Literacy methods and principles into their own situations, I would not suggest that HIL and Save facilitators or planning staff were familiar with the texts I refer to or even that they would recognise the "umbrella" (Willinsky, ibid.) term ("New Literacy") at all. Rather, the influence of the New Literacy could be seen in specific methods that were introduced to the programmes : either directly through training courses or experiences in Western institutions (in Save's case) or indirectly through individual trainers' experience that they brought from other agencies' literacy programmes (HIL). Some of these approaches were considered more 'new' than others (for example, LGM and Language Experience Approach had only come on the scene since the '90s, whereas top-down approaches to reading have been used in the government **Naya Goreto** programme since the '80s), and are often perceived as Western imported techniques, signalled by frequent labelling in English (a "colonising" literacy practice, Street 1987).

***Sangalo* or *Kosalee*?**[25]

The New Writing: Learner Generated Materials (LGM)

Save USA in Nepal is considered to be a pioneer in the LGM approach, partly promoting the idea "in response to the increasing demand for locally-based materials in the local languages of remote communities.." (Manandhar and Leslie, 1994: 108). Staff members have attended courses run by the University of Massachusetts on LGM and the whole language approach, and Save is now a training resource for other literacy programmes in Nepal. Until recently, the production of LGM has usually taken place as an 'event' rather than being part of the day-to-day teaching in the adult course: outstanding participants, facilitators and staff gathered together for a workshop lasting two or three days. The texts that they wrote during the workshop (either collaboratively or individually) were edited in Kathmandu and published as books (called **Sangalo** meaning "Collection") to be used as textbooks for the post literacy classes. Although participants wrote about their own ideas, Save differs from Willinsky's ideal of learners creating the texts for themselves in schools in that the NGO has taken over the publishing and editing of work.

I was in Arutar village when the first **Sangalo** book (Save's LGM) was brought in published form from Kathmandu. There was great excitement as Sushila, a low caste girl from the village, had actually attended the LGM workshop last year in the area and her story about the discrimination that low castes face was published in the book. I was amazed to see a group of men sitting on a wall reading the book aloud and every time I passed Sushila's house on the way to observe the adult class, I would see her sitting on her bed reading her own story by oil lamp. Sushila, as the unmarried daughter of elderly parents, spent all her days working in the fields, or as she would say, "carrying dung". After her story was published in **Sangalo**, her parents and neighbours talked about her with some pride as a "writer" (see Appendix VI). Sushila's change in status as a writer, rather than the more passive 'adult student', clearly links to Willinsky's account of how the New Literacy can "shift the control of literacy from the teacher to the student" (Willinsky, 1990:8).

The LGM books that Save produced were viewed in a very different way from the regular textbook used for advanced classes, called **Kosalee** (significantly the title means "a little gift"). Alina, the Arutar facilitator, told me how excited the class were when she read out an LGM story about what happened to a woman after she became literate. Alina then told them that they could also write like this later. In a refresher training, advanced class facilitators commented that their classes preferred **Sangalo** : "they like **Sangalo** best as it has thoughts from the participants' minds in it. Everyone said they liked it better than **Kosalee**" (27/2/96). I visited a school in a neighbouring district where I found the teachers sitting in the staff room reading **Sangalo** together : unlike the other literacy books, LGM books seemed to be read in groups. When I talked to them about the idea of publishing neo-literates' stories, they said they thought

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[25] **Sangalo** and **Kosalee** are the names of Save's post-literacy primers : meaning "a collection" and "a little gift" respectively, representing two different approaches to literacy teaching (LGM versus traditional reader).

it was appropriate that school children should read books written by "big people" (i.e. established writers) but that adult literacy classes should read books written by people like themselves, "small people", as they will be able to understand them better. I was surprised that they justified LGM in terms of the locally prevalent view of school education being superior to adult education, since they themselves were sitting reading the books for pleasure in their break times. Save however could also be said to promote LGM in similar terms: "these materials will be appropriate and realistic for the standard of their peers in literacy classes" (Manandhar and Leslie, 1994: 108).

While I was staying in Arutar, Save decided to abolish the formal exam that they had used to assess how much participants had learnt in the six month course. Devendra, the Education Specialist in Arughat, had the idea of replacing it with LGM: "if women can participate in LGM at the end of the course, that is proof that they have learnt enough". I was present when he tried to explain to the facilitators the new function of LGM. After being instructed to ask the participants to do "free writing" every week, a facilitator (Tirtha) asked Devendra:

*Tirtha: If they write something themselves, can we send it to the office and you publish it like **Sangalo**?*

Devendra: We will put it in a file for each centre and this will be like an exam.

Tirtha: So they could write about nigalo (small kind of bamboo)

Devendra: No, that came up last year

Tirtha: No, that was a story about bas (big kind of bamboo) - nigalo is different from bas

*Devendra: Do what they want to write about : "free" (English word) writing. Like about their children or their husband. We are thinking of changing **Kosalee** to give meaningful learning without a message. To give what people want to read. We need to find what their real needs are and make a new book.*

Fieldnotes: 27/2/96, Arughat (Save)

What is interesting here are the different meanings that Devendra and Tirtha have for "LGM". For Tirtha, the meaning lies in publishing participants' writing as a book and he has a fixed idea about suitable topics, based on the subjects (such as "bamboo") that have already come up in **Sangalo**. Devendra has a wider view of LGM as a methodology associated with English words like "free" writing, influenced by the fact he received training in English from an American specialist. He also recognises the different kinds of writing in **Kosalee** and **Sangalo**: that the latter is not so didactic (though some of the LGM stories do echo the textbook as participants feel that their stories should have a message like how good it is to be literate).

In the final session of the facilitators' training, Devendra elaborates more about how to conduct LGM as an evaluation process and it becomes clear that his idea of "exams" as a formal mechanism in the schools is influencing how LGM is to be used from now on:

Devendra: You can do LGM for every work. We can say nothing about the participants if you don't put it in the file. The file says more than a report. Bring the file to every meeting we have. Let them bring writing from home also. LGM means things they wrote in class but they can also write at home....

Devendra tells them that every month they should fill in a report form for Save office (distributes three each), giving a score of 5 for each category, making a total of 60 (i.e. marking the LGM[26]). He tells them to make time with [the supervisor for Manbhu] so that he can help them.

Devendra : Don't be lazy "please" (English). If you put it in the file, we will know who passed or failed.

He sticks up an example form, and fills in an example of Phul Maya, explaining this is for first week, second week...

Prem : What about the exam for **Kosalee 1***?*

Devendra: It is not to do with the book, it's about what they do in the day (free writing). You can't do 1 to 4 activities (techniques he explained earlier) in one day. It takes two or three days to do them all. Like if it is object writing, don't give just one object, but many. What do you like best, question/answer exam or "free" writing?

Hari: "Free" is best as they can write in their own language. We can still do question/ answer in every lesson.

Alina: How do we see their reading?

Devendra: In the class, through observation. The maximum score is 5. If they are fast they might get that. Must watch everyone well. Need to ask more questions.

Hari: Like why, how..

Prem : We can't fill all this in in one month.

Devendra: Yes you can (getting annoyed) - don't you understand?

Fieldnotes: 27/2/96, Save Facilitators' Refresher Training, Arughat

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[26] There was however no indication of criteria for marking - i.e. what was being evaluated.

Devendra gives out a form which the facilitators are to fill in every month: they are to conduct LGM regularly and give a mark out of five for each activity. The stories would be held like exam scripts in a file and provide the evidence if supervisors came to visit. After this session, I heard the facilitators chatting with each other - they were not clear how to conduct LGM as Devendra's explanation of activities had been so interspersed with English words. The facilitators also wondered about the objectivity of this kind of exam - on the basis of the previous exam which was marked by the office, facilitators had been rewarded for good results. Now they wondered how they were to mark their own participants' stories. Devendra, by contrast, did not see any difficulty in giving a mark out of five for "free" writing.

Comparing this account to Willinsky's descriptions of the New Literacy in a classroom, we can see a big shift in the meaning and principles of LGM: "the classroom becomes more of a space for them (children) to make their mark and less of an institution given to marking them" (ibid.: 232). As we saw earlier, LGM originally was a way for women like Sushila to "make their mark", but by using LGM as an exam, the opposite process is taking place. LGM is now "marking them". Devendra's own background from a school system with a strong emphasis on passing exams, determines how he intends to use LGM as an evaluation method. Instead of using LGM as a process for learning reading and writing through "the New Literacy's effort to emulate writing-in-the-world" (ibid.: 53), LGM has come to be seen in terms of its products, autonomous texts to be marked.

Later in the month, I observed Alina (the Arutar facilitator) conducting an exam using LGM. She called all the women at a special time (not at night like the usual class) to a participant's house and they sat outside on mats writing. When Alina produced a hasiya (scythe used for grass cutting) for them to write about, the women started to laugh:

Chinimaya: whatever next.. now we have a hasiya exam

Laxmi: that's what we farmers need

Fieldnotes: 10/4/96, Arutar (Save)

During the activity, the women openly copied from each other and used the textbook to look up words they did not know. Alina did not seem to mind. The women seemed to enjoy the exam, the emphasis being on who could write most and having an unusual hour in the daytime when they could study together. Observing, I felt that maybe some of the original ideas of LGM, writing collaboratively and enjoyment in creating a text, were not lost even when used in this context as an exam. As the activity of writing about a scythe did not count in the women's eyes as an "exam", the experience was actually closer to Save's earlier way of using LGM : a time when women got together to think and write. The fact that Alina did not conduct the activity in the manner of a formal exam (silence and individual work) also showed that she was unsure of

the intended nature of LGM in this context (as outlined by Devendra above). Perhaps the "exam" part for her came only later when she had to mark their papers.

The ways in which LGM was used within Save suggest that though the concept within the New Literacy carried implications of lack of standardisation, students becoming publishers and in control of the process, these characteristics were not always apparent in the literacy classrooms. Even within Save as an organisation, LGM carried differing meanings which influenced how it was used in practice. Above all, the facilitators', trainers' and participants' experiences of schooling in a more formal traditional context meant that LGM can become intertwined with apparently opposing concepts such as "marking" and "exam".

The educational and professional background of the facilitator thus made a big difference to how LGM was used in the literacy class. One night, the Arutar literacy class was taken by Angila. She was the regular facilitator's sister and taught in the primary school by day. She had not received training from Save so had not been introduced to methods like LGM, though she was aware that teaching adults was different from school teaching. Watching her lesson, it was possible to identify the ways in which *school* teaching differed from *adult* teaching and the implications around introducing LGM into adult classes. Angila was teaching a page where participants were to make up their own sentences from given words, then write them in the boxes (see Appendix VII). She began by asking them to discuss and write their own sentences but then seemed quite panic-stricken as they all produced different answers and had made spelling mistakes. She decided to change approach and write the sentence herself:

> *Angila: Look everyone, look here. We'll do a sentence from "community".*
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> *She writes on the blackboard: Everyone should be a participant in a community to live their lives.*
>
> *She looks and realises it is too long and difficult (covering the whole board).*
>
> *Angila: Everyone understand? I made it long. If you can make a short one, do it.*
>
> *Monmaya hands her book to Lalita to copy the sentence out for her.*
>
> *Fieldnotes: 12/1/96. Arutar literacy class (Save)*

Afterwards Angila discussed the lesson with me and it was obvious that she realised something had gone wrong in her class - though in the local primary school she was one of the better teachers and extremely confident. She kept telling me how different it was to teach adults: she seemed to have picked up on the fact that the adult textbook, **Kosalee**, was a different genre from the school textbooks and needed to be taught in a new way. She realised that she should be able to respond to the women as individuals if they wrote their own sentences, but was unsure how to do this in a class situation as she was used to teaching forty students by rote. She therefore tried to use her school techniques but even writing the sentence herself did not work

as the women were used to writing the L register Nepali used in the course and relating the words given (e.g. "community") to everyday life. Angila's sentence was completely academic and Monmaya did not even feel confident to copy it from the board by herself.

This example of Angila's teaching illustrates the assumptions about education that facilitators often hold, simply as a result of their own experiences in the formal system. Using LGM in the adult literacy classes was problematic partly because the structure was so different from schools : the facilitators did not receive much training compared to the primary teachers Willinsky described and the adult class ran only for six months. Unlike the schools, the adult classes were a temporary event in people's lives and any new educational philosophy was likely to be affected by the more permanent educational institutions in the area, the schools. The other major difference was that concepts like LGM were seen as coming from the West (signalled by the way the term "LGM" was used in English). As Street (1991) described with reference to the "colonising" effect of certain literacies in Iran, LGM could also be seen as introducing new values along with the new literacy practice. Some of these values (collaborative learning, lack of standardisation) were perceived by Angila when she tried to do free sentence writing, but she was unable to integrate them into her normal teaching style.

Ko, ka, ki, ki, ku, ku, ke, koy[27]

The New Reading : the 'top-down' versus 'bottom-up' models

In both Save's and HIL's literacy programmes, reading was intended to follow an ideology similar to that outlined by Willinsky (1990) - stressing "the importance of knowledge that the reader brings to the page" (ibid.: 67), the top-down model[28]. This principle lies behind the 'functional' objective of the Government's **Naya Goreto** course (with which both Save and HIL staff were familiar): that reading passages should reflect the participants' local environment and problems they faced so as to provide a source of discussion (Walker et al, 1980). Unlike the new approaches to writing, such as LGM, the top-down approach to reading was not disseminated to literacy staff through specific training workshops run by outsiders so did not appear to be identified, like LGM, as an "imported" literacy practice. Rather, facilitators seemed to be

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[27] In the bottom-up approach to reading, participants recite in turn each consonant (e.g. 'ko') with the different vowel sounds attached: this step is known by facilitators and participants as learning "subda bag krum" (word part order). The highly structured lesson plans follow a series of numbered steps which are described in **Naya Goreto** Facilitators' Guidebook , but also passed on orally by facilitators and trainers. Once the participants have memorised each string of word parts, they should be able to recognise words in a reading passage by breaking each word down into syllables (word parts).

[28] Fordham, Holland, Millican (1995: 61) present the two approaches to reading and writing diagrammatically : a top-down approach starts from communicating meaning, then moves to understanding sentences to recognising words to recognising letters. The bottom-up approach follows the same pattern but starting from the stage of recognising letters and moving "up" to meaning. I find this explanation is useful to analyse the actual methods facilitators used in the classes I observed - to show how the two approaches can come together.

already familiar (through informal contact with other literacy classes) with this way of teaching reading and they associated it with nonformal rather than school education. I did however observe a formal session during Save's initial facilitators' training course where trainees were encouraged to teach reading in small groups so that participants could listen and discuss the meaning before decoding the words.

Describing the "whole language" approach, Goodman (1986: 39) lays down specific principles which could be applied to the top-down model of reading advocated by Save trainers: "Readers construct meaning during reading. They use prior learning and experience to make sense of the texts. Readers predict, select, confirm and self-correct as they seek to make sense of print." Hill and Parry's discussion (1994) of reading tests in terms of the "pragmatic" versus the "autonomous" models of literacy places emphasis on reading as a "social skill" (ibid.: 18) and "an act of communication" (ibid.: 31) rather than Goodman's more technical account[29]. Their discussion of three kinds of skill necessary to reading thus provides a way of analysing how exactly the New Literacy reading approaches were being used in the programmes I studied: "First is knowing a writing system and understanding the linguistic forms used in a text; second is possessing appropriate background knowledge and knowing how to apply it; and third is being able to engage in a reciprocal exchange that is appropriate to the text being read" (Hill and Parry, 1994:32). The top-down approach to reading thus did not necessarily involve Hill and Parry's third level ("reciprocal exchange") if facilitators continued to treat text as an "object rather than action" (ibid.: 18), as in the autonomous model.

The reading passages used in HIL and Save were of a similar genre - stories written around a strong development message - and this influenced how facilitators chose to teach reading. In the Arutar class, the top-down model of reading only worked well when the participants' experience supported the message in the story. For example, one week the story was about deforestation and Alina related the story to events in Arutar - a family had just been caught cutting down a whole forest near their house and had been brought to justice by the village forestry committee. On another occasion however, local experience did not support the reading passage which was about a community getting together to repair the village water tank with their own resources. In Arutar, the women who attended the adult class had been labouring by day carrying sand to build a new village water system:

(Alina has just read the story aloud - see Appendix VIII)

Alina: You see, it's about repairing the village water tank. Everyone has to pay 20 rupees each to have it done.

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[29] The use of the word "pragmatic" rather than "ideological" links them with a linguistic rather than an anthropological perspective since "pragmatics is that area of linguistics concerned with 'the use of language in communication'" (Hill and Parry, 1994: 21).

*Chinimaya laughs: But they pay **us** here. We get 2 rupees for carrying the sand.*

Alina (irritably): I don't know about that. I am talking about the book. It says we all have to work together for our own village. Each house has to give 5 boys' work for five days. Can you remember what happened from top to bottom?

Fieldnotes: 29/11/95, Arutar literacy class (Save)

In this case, Chinimaya rather than the facilitator, makes the link between real life and the textbook - however, as it does not fit the message (that villagers should give free labour), Alina tries to create a distance between them and "the book", treating the passage as "object" (ibid.: 18). We can see here a clear contradiction in the idea of top-down models of reading being used with texts that have a didactic purpose. Alina's limited experience and training as a facilitator did not enable her to deal with the situation, for example, by starting a discussion on the contradictory experience of Arutar. So the participants were encouraged to relate their own experiences only when supporting evidence for the message in the book. In other words, Alina was unable to use "pragmatically" a top-down approach to reading: "to engage in a reciprocal exchange that is appropriate to the text being read" (ibid.: 32). She took an autonomous view of the text, resorting to testing the participants' memory and "understanding the linguistic forms used in a text" (ibid.).

In the HIL programme in Lalitpur, the gap between the text and the participants' lives was more apparent. The course was intended to convey health messages and information that in many cases the women did not agree with or could not be bothered with - such as building and using toilets. The facilitators were aware of this (as they came from the same community and also did not consider toilets a necessity) and they dealt with it by treating the reading passages as purely technical exercises in decoding the letters. The class would read each syllable in unison after the teacher and then take individual turns to read in a monotonous chanting fashion, breaking words down into syllables so that the sense of the passage was not apparent. Some class members would manage to switch turns between each other without the teacher saying a word. In many classes, the teacher would use the reading sessions as a time to relax, even going outside the room while the class read the text over and over again. The women welcomed this bottom-up model of reading and if the facilitators tried to initiate discussion by relating passages to their lives, they would giggle or chat amongst themselves.

The fact that the HIL trainers produced the sheets themselves (rather than using a ready-made textbook as Save did) made a big difference to the way reading was seen. Rather than using the reading passage as a basis for discussion, the class would sometimes discuss a topic the week before the passage was prepared. By the time the lesson sheet appeared, the message in the passage was often a summary of the discussion that had happened the week before and the emphasis was on the technical side of reading it. This extract from my fieldnotes shows how the staff were more attentive to the mechanical elements of reading and writing, partly because

they had to construct the reading passages from a limited number of letters each week. Though they appeared to view the actual text as an "object" (Hill and Parry, ibid.) which they produced, the "action" associated with Hill and Parry's pragmatic approach had actually taken place before the text was created.

At the weekly training session for HIL facilitators, the lesson sheets for the following week were given out:

> *Suddenly Nagina notices that the artist has been correcting all the madness sheets (to be given out now). He has changed 'families do not let mad people go out' to 'families throw out mad people'. Nagina exclaims in horror as the first sentence was correct. Sharda says, who would throw out their own family members! By now he has changed them all and has to rechange them - he is reluctant to admit the mistake and starts saying the grammar is wrong. Mani supports him saying that the sentence is difficult to understand. Nagina says the problem is that you have to write using only the letters that have already been taught so it limits what you can say.*
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> *Fieldnotes: 23/12/95, Tikkathali (HIL)*

In this example, we can see differing assumptions in the way the passage is read, which could be related to the distinction between autonomous and pragmatic models. The artist was reading for the grammatical fit of the passage (autonomous model) whereas Nagina and Sharda were relating their own experiences to the passage - "who would throw out their own family members!" (a pragmatic approach). The fact that this group were also responsible for creating the text made a big difference to the way in which they viewed it. When they read aloud, they would look critically at the punctuation, arguing if there should be an exclamation mark or full stop. They were all aware however of the genre of literacy texts prevalent in literacy projects and their materials followed the same model to the extent of having an explicit message. Writing the questions that came at the end of a reading passage always required a lot of discussion since they were concerned to get only one answer:

Mani started to write questions about pneumonia on the blackboard [in Nepali]. First he wrote "What is pneumonia?" then 2) What are the reasons for getting pneumonia? Rajan said, "you should write 'symptoms' not 'reasons'" and Mani replied that they mean the same. Everyone joined in vociferously discussing which word should be used. Mani wrote number 3 question : What happens if you get pneumonia? Everyone criticised him saying this time he should use the word lakshun (symptoms/ characteristics). They rewrote the question as : What are the symptoms of pneumonia? Sharda then suggested question 4 could be: Can you give first aid for pneumonia? Astha said the questions were too long and that it would take her class too long to copy from the board. Nagina explained that the questions were only for the follow-up classes, not basic.

Mani wrote on the board Pneumonia deray juso (Pneumonia is usually...) when everyone stopped him. "You can't put the word 'age' as noone understands it" argued Sharda[30]. She suggested he should put "who gets pneumonia?" instead of "pneumonia is usually caught by which age group?" The others said it should say "under what age do you catch pneumonia". They all had the same answer in their heads - "under fives" - so it was just a problem of how to make sure they got that question. In the end they agreed to write "Which age group gets pneumonia?"

Fieldnotes: 4/11/95, Tikkathali (HIL)

The discussion that takes place here shows many characteristics of the New Literacy approach as described by Willinsky : a collaborative effort where the facilitators argue about the meaning of each possible sentence and how it will be understood by the women in their classes. They start from a knowledge of their students' reading and writing skills so are concerned to write appropriate questions. Though they have an idea of the knowledge students bring to the class, it is purely technical knowledge - they are not interested in the women inventing answers that do not mirror the answer they have intended. So the exercise is not intended to get them to think but to recall facts from the passage. In this respect, the model of reading is more autonomous than the Save model described above. The teacher expects the students to take everything from the passage - an emphasis, as in the schools in Nepal, on recall and comprehension of facts about pneumonia.

Comparing the reading sessions in HIL and Save literacy classes, I could see that in the Save programme in Arutar, the top-down approach led to more friction between the facilitator and the participants. In HIL classes, in the more autonomous approach there seemed to be consensus between the facilitator and the class (and also the supervisors) that they should spend more time chanting the reading passages (bottom-up reading) than discussing the ideas in relation to their lives. This attitude could be related to the concern expressed in Willinsky's book

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[30] She guessed that he was about to write "by which age group" (see later).

about how far the teaching methods associated with the New Literacy "misleads" students, in that the philosophy of education within the classroom (such as encouraging creativity instead of standardisation in writing) opposes more popular beliefs prevalent in society (e.g. that unstandardised spelling is "wrong"). The HIL facilitators were keen to go along with what the participants considered education to be. If the class did not approve of new methods introduced, such as trying to create new words from word parts (whole syllables, rather than the traditional approach where words were spelt out by letters and memorised), they would simply not do it. At a training session, Dev Maya (a facilitator) was asked whether she was using the new method and she replied that her class was "too lazy to do word parts". In a lesson I observed on "toilet" (see Appendix IX), the facilitator (Bina) deliberately made the discussion part of the lesson impersonal by asking questions in conditional tense, such as "if you saw someone going to the toilet near water, what could you say?" Her whole discussion was quite academic, getting the women to list the advantages and disadvantages of toilets in Nepali (rather than Newari) as if to distance themselves from the topic. Both she and the women in the class preferred this method to a real discussion about why they themselves do not want to build toilets, and went on to chant the passage, taking an autonomous view of the text.

In the Save Arutar class, the facilitator tried harder to persevere with a top-down approach to reading, based on methods she had learnt in the initial training sessions. She had been trained to read the passage aloud herself first, stopping after each paragraph to discuss the content and bring in the women's experience. The women in the classes found this process very tedious (sometimes the passages were so long that Alina's reading and explanations would take over an hour) and kept trying to intervene so that they could read the passage themselves mechanically broken down into syllables (the bottom-up approach). Alina would keep insisting that they must grasp the meaning first, but often during her own reading aloud, I could hear women reading to themselves, chanting the words in the way that HIL classes did. Alina would break the women into small groups to practise reading but rather than following her model where the others would listen for the meaning, they would adopt the method used in schools: one woman read each word in a sing-song way while the others chanted after her.

Thus in the Save Arutar class, the two approaches to reading (top-down and bottom-up) became a source of conflict between the facilitator and the participants, rather than an unsaid agreement as in the HIL classes to read mechanically once the discussion part was over. The battle in the Arutar class also arose because of the more formal relationship of facilitator with the class, due partly to her different background : Alina was much younger than the participants, well-educated and of a higher caste (in contrast to the HIL classes, where the facilitators tended to be of the same age and caste as participants). Although she used the Save terms of 'facilitator' and 'participants' (on the first night, she said to the women, "you are the participants and I am the facilitator" as if teaching a new language), in her behaviour she followed the more traditional relationship of teacher with students. At the beginning of the course, Alina had even addressed the women at the class as "timi", the form of "you" that a teacher uses with children. So, Alina had not picked up on the main concepts Willinsky identifies with the New Literacy, such as a

more equal relationship of teacher with students (possibly because as I showed earlier, Devendra's training methods also undermined this view), just the new methods of teaching reading and writing. When faced with difficulties in adopting a top-down approach to reading, she emphasised an autonomous view of the text as object and reading as a technical rather than a communicative skill.

The above analysis of how the top-down approach to reading worked in practice in literacy classes brings up issues around the facilitator's relationship with the class which are not so evident in a school classroom. Whereas in a school, there is a certain given divide between teacher and students due to age and experience, in the adult class, the relationship can be more ambiguous and can affect the way new methods are adopted or disputed. The ideas implicit in Willinsky's account of the New Literacy about the teacher giving away some of her authority may seem irrelevant in the adult context where participants already have a more equal relationship in terms of age or work experience. These extra-class factors will determine to an extent how far the facilitator is able to or chooses to adopt the new approach to reading in the adult literacy classroom. **How** new approaches and ideologies were disseminated also affected participants' and facilitators' reactions : for example, top-down reading was not transmitted directly through training, as was LGM. Facilitators tried to adopt the approach partly as a response to the particular genre of the literacy primers (stories relevant to local rural circumstances and with strong development messages). However, as I discussed earlier, the didactic nature of the reading passages (and the way in which they were produced as in HIL) often caused the facilitators to treat them as "autonomous" texts rather than following the "pragmatic" approach usually associated with a top-down reading method.

The examples that I have taken from HIL and Save classrooms show that there is no necessary link between the New Literacy approaches and an ideological view of literacy. In many of the cases, the participants' and facilitators' autonomous views of literacy caused the new teaching methods to be reinterpreted or to be disputed, thus following more traditional pedagogical practices. In the adult classrooms, a mixture of new and traditional teaching methods were apparent : for example, Alina in the Arutar class attempted to use a top-down approach to reading but lacked the facilitation skills to move beyond testing the technical skills of comprehension or decoding words to a more "pragmatic" approach. Bina preferred to use a phonics approach to distance herself and the participants from topics like "toilets" where they disagreed with the development message. These findings have implications for the planning of literacy programmes and how new teaching approaches, such as LGM or top-down reading methods, are viewed in the adult literacy context of developing countries.

These accounts of teaching and learning processes in Save and HIL classrooms thus show the importance of analysing how exactly participants and facilitators "take hold" of new approaches to literacy teaching, many of which were originally developed for schools in the West. Surprisingly, Willinsky (1990: 148) suggests that there is a place for quantitative techniques in the assessment of the "effectiveness" of approaches like top-down reading as compared to traditional literacy teaching and appears to view research only in terms of statistical

evaluation. By moving to a consideration of the New Literacy teaching methods as social processes, I hope by contrast to show the importance of the New Literacy research approaches (such as ethnography, participant observation) for understanding how such pedagogies work in practice.

Grandfathers, fathers and sons:[31] a New Mathematics?

The specific conditions of the HIL and Save classrooms thus influenced the kind of literacy teaching taking place, more than any Western ideologies, such as the New Literacy approaches. My observation of mathematics classes in the adult courses revealed that numeracy teaching was similarly influenced by the background of the facilitators and their relationship with the participants, as well as by new ideas about 'functional' mathematics from the development agencies. By exploring now the kind of mathematics taking place in literacy classes and everyday life, I show how my research approach - based on an ideological model of numeracy and using concepts from the New Literacy Studies, enabled me to find significant differences between how mathematics was taught in HIL and in Save.

Defining a new mathematics

A 'new mathematics' has been developed in Western schools, similar to the New Literacy movement described by Willinsky, which could be generalised as an ideological approach to numeracy as opposed to the autonomous approach, which underlies most traditional mathematics teaching. These differing approaches to mathematics teaching can be related, not just to pedagogical concerns about using effective teaching techniques, but to contrasting perspectives on the relationship between mathematics and society (Joseph, 1993: 17). The autonomous approach disregards the cultural embeddedness of mathematical practices and concentrates instead on isolated skills of subtraction and addition, believing mathematics to be "value-free" (Bishop 1991). Ideological approaches, such as the "cognition in practice" movement (Lave, 1988), by contrast stress the importance of social context and question the basic assumption that mathematical skills learnt in school can be transferred to everyday life situations. Such approaches have led researchers to conduct ethnographic studies of everyday activities such as people shopping in a supermarket or how Brazilian street children use arithmetic (Nunes et al, 1993). The development of mathematics in the UK schools and Western mathematics generally has been based on differing ideas around how or whether "school mathematics" relates to everyday mathematics. These views influenced activities conducted in maths classes (e.g. how far practical mathematics entered the classroom) as well as the

[31] This is a reference to the method devised by HIL trainers to explain the concepts of carry-over and borrowing (as described in detail later).

relationship between teacher and pupil, as in the more egalitarian ideal classroom of the New Literacy.

Unlike the New Literacy, the New Mathematics need not necessarily be seen as a Western influence, for example, the idea of 'practical mathematics', which tends to be associated with a *new* approach to mathematics teaching, has been identified by Joseph (1996) as an essential element of the traditional mathematics education in Kerala, India. In Nepal, although approaches to teaching adults mathematics contrasted with the teaching methods in local schools, the Western influence associated with The New Literacy was not so apparent: the new mathematical approaches were not signalled through English labels like LGM.

Everyday mathematics in Lalitpur and Arughat

As in the reading and writing examples earlier, HIL and Save were contrasting in the way they taught mathematics and how far they chose to relate the mathematical activities in class to the participants' lives. In this section, I describe everyday mathematics in Lalitpur and Arughat in order to provide a background for later discussion about how far the mathematics teaching in literacy classes took into account real life mathematics and cultural differences. Relating the movements in school mathematics to adult literacy programmes, the 'utilitarian' approach of the late '70s (Dowling, 1991) could be likened to the 'functional' adult literacy approach where numeracy skills useful in everyday life are taught. However, in Nepal even within programmes where functional literacy is promoted, mathematics often mirrors Western traditional school textbooks where more theoretical discourse is privileged. Facilitators are all too aware of the difficulties of teaching 'Western' mathematics to women who use different local systems of counting and measuring. The following extract from my fieldnotes is a conversation I had with a facilitator from a German-funded literacy programme near to Arughat (he was also a school teacher):

> *I asked him what he thought about the maths [*in the **Naya Goreto** basic literacy course]. *"The big cultural difference is that people in the village count 1 - 20 as one package, then start again, so they say bis bis (i.e. twenty-twenty) for forty. If you give them 100 rupees, they break it into twenties. They know that three twenties are sixty, but it is difficult to explain 55. The course teaches 1 to 20, then sums like 100 + 100 + 100 which are very difficult if you are using twenties. Division is also hard, for example, 221 divided by 2. I learnt one method in adult literacy which is very good and I use it in school now - using a number line for plus and minus". He explained that he had learnt this in a GTZ training programme.*
>
> *Fieldnotes: 19/11/95, Arughat*

The facilitator had identified the "cultural difference" between the maths in the literacy textbook and the maths in the village: that counting locally is on base 20 rather than base 10. He did not however question that Western maths should be taught in the adult class and welcomed the new technique of a number line that he had learnt on a German training programme. His concern was how he as a local facilitator was to bridge the gap between the two kinds of mathematics. ActionAid is one of the few agencies to try to explore this cultural dimension: the **REFLECT Mother Manual** (Archer and Cottingham, 1996b) describes how to conduct a socio-mathematical survey before starting a literacy programme, since "to develop a numeracy programme suitable for adults, the starting point should be people's daily experience" (ibid.: 16). From my Nepal experience, it would seem that few programmes are planned in this way initially but that some facilitators (as above) do end up taking into account people's daily mathematical experience in the teaching process, even if this is not reflected in the actual materials used.

In Lalitpur many of the HIL women participants ran tea shops or worked in carpet factories during the daytime so used mathematics outside the class (e.g. keeping accounts as most people took tea on credit, interpreting the carpet weaving pattern "graphs"). The facilitators, being from the same communities, were aware of the women's "everyday mathematics" and tried to relate the abstract class maths (which I describe later) to their daily situations. As the following conversation shows, this HIL participant found the class maths helped in her tea shop work and, as I discussed earlier in relation to English language, learning mathematics could be seen as a gender issue here. This woman no longer had to rely on her husband to help with her business:

> *She told me she went to the adult class so that she could learn maths. Before, she could do it in her head but not write it down. Previously she had to remember everything then ask her husband to write it down when he came in. Now she can keep a record of everyone's bills though sometimes writing their names is difficult and they don't know how to do it. Most people take their snack without paying so they have to give them a monthly bill.*
>
> *Fieldnotes: Changanathali (HIL), 16/2/96*

The value of learning mathematics in the classes was seen as around literacy (learning to write down 'sums') and learning calculations - the main kind of mathematics taught in local schools:

> *I asked them about maths and if they had been able to do calculations before the classes started - said of course they could, but that now they can do more and write it down if necessary. Before they just did it in their head.*
>
> *Fieldnotes: discussion with class participants in Changanathali (HIL), 22/12/95*

Though many of the HIL participants were already doing oral calculations in their everyday businesses and were keen to learn a written form of mathematics in class, in Arutar, I observed several incidents which suggested that the Save participants were less familiar with "everyday mathematics".

Surya's husband has just set up a teashop in Arutar village (Surya is a class participant):

> *Surya's husband suddenly turned up and shouted at Surya that he needed oil, milk and chiura [beaten rice] quickly to make snacks in time for the school break. He threw her a pile of money (mostly ones) and said to go and buy it quick...Surya didn't move - sat looking at the money saying 'he wants me to buy all that with this'. She gave the money to Misra and asked her to count it. Misra started, then Surya said 'ten', trying to help - Misra laughed 'she calls the old one rupee notes, ten!' There were 37 rupees (not enough to buy milk which had to come from the bazaar in a tin).*
>
> *Fieldnotes: Arutar, 11/1/96 (Save)*

Surya, a regular class participant, was evidently not used to counting notes. Misra was a class drop-out, but seemed to have picked up literacy and numeracy skills informally before marriage when she lived in a more urban area. Like the majority of class participants, they are Majhi caste : traditionally fishing folk, but also involved in subsistence farming so not used to handling much money in their everyday lives. Significantly it was only women of the Newar (business) caste who mentioned to me that they wanted to come to the class to learn more maths. Another Majhi participant, Laxmi, had received weaving training from Save so that she could earn an income: she was disabled so unable to do agricultural work. To help her find a market for her products, the Save education specialist had asked her to weave bags for all the literacy facilitators: the bags were to be big enough to hold the literacy primer and class register. Laxmi made the bags but not one was big enough - she seemed to have no idea how to measure the material to fit the book. Save refused to buy the bags but luckily Laxmi found an alternative market as the bags happened to be the right size for school children's books! Like Surya, Laxmi

had entered a new vocational area for which she needed to have additional mathematical skills. However, the Majhis were unable to pick up these skills informally from others in their community : the Newars laughed at the idea of the Majhis setting up a teashop, saying Majhis can never handle money, and Laxmi had no fellow weavers to learn measuring from (unlike the girls learning carpet weaving in Lalitpur).

These incidents emphasise the importance of the social context in which mathematics teaching took place : both in terms of the everyday mathematics that women already engaged in and how far they were able to articulate what mathematics they needed from the class. The kind of mathematics taking place in classes was influenced by these factors, as much as by the curriculum or any 'new mathematics' approaches introduced by the literacy planners.

Maths in the classroom

In both the adult programmes I looked at, there were no "informal numeracy practices" taking place in the actual class (Baker, 1996) : mathematics seemed to belong to the autonomous approach of practising isolated skills of addition and subtraction. If we compare Save USA's and HIL's lesson sheets on mathematics, the former **appeared** to be more functional, taking into account the participants' backgrounds. HIL lesson sheets consisted of pages of sums, varying only in the number of figures used and the numerical operations introduced (see Appendix XI). However, I discovered through class observation that how these sheets were used by the facilitator determined how far they differed from the traditional Western mathematics of the local schools.

An example of a mathematics lesson from the Save class in Arutar :

Alina (facilitator) reads out the first question:

(p 78) In Lekhani and Ridha villages there are 240 children under 5 years. Last year diarrhoea and measles struck the village. 105 children died from the disease. How many children were left?

Alina : What village was it?

Surya: Lekhani

Alina: What disease?

All: Diarrhoea and measles

Alina: What sort of sum is this?

Laxmi M: subtraction maybe

Surya : subtracting not adding

Alina tells them to write in their books, 240 - 105

Januka says she has got no book so I give her some paper.

Januka: It was inside my book, now it's gone.

Everyone writes in their books.

Januka: Write 240 first? Now 105 people died?

Alina: Put the sign (Savitri puts it correctly).

Januka's daughter then takes over writing for Savitri. I explain it in rupees as ten take away five rupees and Surya immediately knows the answer - whereas she couldn't work it out in abstract.

Januka finishes quickly and Alina tells her to do number 2.

Alina : Everyone - do it yourself, don't copy. Listen everyone.

She reads number 2 and explains it. At home, read all the questions and do them in your copy book then copy them into the book. Do it on your own, don't let others do it for you.

Laxmi A is still working very hard, on her own. Monmaya says she will do it in the daylight when she can see.

Fieldnotes: 27/2/96, Arutar literacy class (Save)

I chose this example as the textbook appears to be presenting a real-life local situation: all the women are familiar with epidemics of diarrhoea and measles where huge numbers of children die. The example is set in a village, rather than a town (as in the school textbooks). The unfamiliar part regards the mathematical operation: how many villagers ever need to calculate the number of children surviving an epidemic? Alina recognises the relevant part of the question and asks the women the name of the village and diseases : however she cannot ask them the mathematical question based on their own experience but has to tell, rather than ask them, how to present the information as a sum. At this stage, the lesson becomes more academic in the way the maths is represented: Alina uses the technical term "subtraction" and puts in the minus sign to indicate that they are now concentrating on a specific sum. Nunes (1996: 73) discusses how the systems of signs provided in mathematics can "constrain subjects' reasoning": this seems to be the way in which Alina uses mathematical signs in her lesson. Interestingly, one participant (Januka) tries to relate the sum back to the original question but she is not encouraged to do this. When I tried to help Surya, I found she could do the subtraction in her head if it was said as "rupees" (money) rather than "children dead" since she was able to calculate the amount of money mentally. This supports research discussed in Chapter 3 that "specific practices promote specific skills" (Scribner and Cole, 1978) and relates to Nunes' finding that people used strategies related to the social situations in which they had learnt maths:

"School mathematics" as opposed to everyday or street mathematics tends to distance it from meaning (Nunes et al, 1993). Using Dowling's observation (1991:99) about the "separation of the discourse of school mathematics from everyday... discourses", we can see that Alina reinforced this gap, distancing the 'everyday' meaning through her emphasis on signs and the correct mathematical presentation of the problem.

Alina stresses the importance of working alone and not copying (a characteristic associated with formal numeracy practices (Baker, 1996)), in order to emphasise that this is academic not real or everyday mathematics: an attitude moving away from the more collaborative approach associated with the New Literacy. Her teaching is based on many of the assumptions of the autonomous approach to mathematics: stressing the development of skills, not applied in a practical context. The "real life" examples just fit the formal tasks. I observed her trying to teach tens and units in another lesson and though she had been trained by Save to use practical aids such as bundles of sticks, she was extremely reluctant to abandon her 'chalk and talk' method. After we discussed the lesson, I realised it was more due to her own lack of understanding of the concepts behind tens and units and an attempt to mirror the traditional way she had been taught in school. The lessons in the Save textbook also reinforced many of these assumptions: for example, when a new operation was introduced, the sum would be accompanied by a lengthy written explanation. It implied that the facilitator was to read this out rather than use practical aids. Other pages had boxes that were to be filled in (see Appendix X) which even the facilitator would be unsure how to complete. The skill was not so much around mathematics as understanding the specific format required for presenting information, a new genre. This kind of mathematics was not related to basic skills such as addition and subtraction but could be thought of as learning an "academic literacy practice" (Lea and Street, 1996). This term suggests that learning a new subject is not simply a matter of acquiring new skills but understanding the social practices, such as specific written codes and conventions, associated with an academic discipline (Street, 1996).

The mathematics sheets in the Save textbook, which were an unfamiliar genre, presented a very different challenge from HIL lesson sheets which consisted of many school-like sums. The HIL facilitators had no problems guessing what was behind the sheets, whereas Save facilitators' first task was to understand the purpose behind the box filling. The HIL staff did not stress the use of practical aids but had developed their own way of explaining concepts like 'borrow' and 'take away' which they felt would be understood better than abstract terms.

A HIL Saturday training session:

Nagina asks if someone can teach 6221

- 1658

without using carryover (borrowing = hat lagnu) method. I was intrigued! Naresh from Malatar got up and did it on the board, explaining it as rupees. He called 1 the son, father is two and he gives the son one. Not enough so had to take from the grandfather and so on, until the great-grandfather.

Most of the facilitators say they don't bother to use the 'family' method to explain, just carryover one.

Artist: the advantage is that they understand hundreds, tens and units better this way than just carrying over.

Fieldnotes: 23/12/95, Tikkathali (HIL)

The "family" method of describing ones as the "son", tens as the "father" and hundreds as the "grandfather" was developed by HIL staff to get across the idea of place value. The description drew on the concept of the family which was common in this area, with men as the key figures. The HIL staff tended to refer to this method as the "opposite" of carryover method, but actually it was just another way of explaining (rather than showing) the same concept. This emphasis on describing and naming could be related to the greater importance of the "oral mode of preserving and disseminating knowledge" and the "close relationship between literacy and numeracy" that Joseph describes in the development of "mathematical Sanskrit" (Joseph, 1996: 196). HIL also had lesson sheets consisting of the written numbers which participants would learn to recite. As the above discussion from my fieldnotes suggests, the "family" method was not that popular with the facilitators as they had all learnt to explain carryover in the way used in schools. The fact that Naresh (a facilitator) chose to explain the abstract sum in rupees is perhaps a greater indication of how mathematics teaching worked in practice. The facilitators, coming from a similar background to the participants, were very aware of how and why the women needed to do such calculations and in their explanations would relate abstract sums to daily life, not just that imagined by textbook writers. By leaving the mathematics sheets as abstract sums, the HIL staff allowed the facilitators to interpret the sums as they felt appropriate. Another extract from my fieldnotes shows how this process took place in the literacy classes:

Sharda (facilitator) is making up sums verbally: Next one. A person has 632/- (rupees) and buys or spends 325/- on things, how much is left?

She calls Jamna to the board and she says it to herself as she writes, does it very quickly. Sharda asks everyone if it is right - kha ('yes' in Newari).

Sharda: A girl has 1,500/- (how many numbers is that? Yes - four) and her mother gives her 525/- for buying clothes, how much does she have?

They all discuss in Newari and at first the girl that Sharda picks to write on the board, refuses to get up. Sharda - Why do you make such a fuss about getting up? The girl gets up and writes perfectly on the board.

Sharda: Now let's do English

Girls: (in Newari) Let's do more maths - we don't know it

Sharda: Only division is hard. Now first you need to remember the numbers. How much is 100? How many zeroes?

I notice in the corner two girls are saying the numbers in English (one of them is knitting at the same time). Sharda tells me they can go up to 70. One chants the number and the other one repeats it.

Sharda does 3)575 (one girl says five thousand instead of five hundred) on the blackboard, explaining each step in Nepali, then goes into Newari when they ask a question. There is an animated conversation about 25 (why?).

Sharda: If 895/- is divided between 6 people, how much for one person?

Jamna is yawning. They all whisper together as they do it in their books. Sharda only helps individuals if they ask - she doesn't ever bend down to see their books. She goes through the sum, asking how many parts does 29 eat[32]*. She goes through the times tables to work it out. Sharda tends to ask a question, then answer it herself (e.g. How much is left? Four rupees). She asks Mira if she understands - kha (seems to be the weakest student).*

Sharda: (about to finish) Today we have only done maths. Now let's do carpets. A carpet costs 5,035 /- (you need to think how many figures in 5,000 - the hundred has none, so what do you put?)

All reply - zero

Fieldnotes : 17/12/95, Sanagow (Sharda's class), HIL

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[32] The Nepali word "eat" (khane) is often used in the context of money to mean "spent" or "consumed". Sharda here is referring to the second stage of the division sum, meaning "what is 29 divided by 6?" or "how many 6s can 29 'eat'?"

This description illustrates how the HIL classes differed from Save Arutar in that the facilitator and participants had more control over what was being taught and how. As well as being able to choose when and what to teach in terms of subjects (the participants keep asking for more mathematics), the facilitators have great flexibility in what they teach within each subject. Sharda makes up her own examples for mathematics as the lesson sheets do not suggest any particular context for sums. Her statement "let's do carpets" suggests that they think of addition with carpets as different from sums about how much a girl spends on dresses (the importance of social context, Lave 1988). All her examples suggest that she is familiar with how these girls use mathematics in everyday life (they nearly all work in carpet factories) but she also emphasises the mechanical side of mathematics, when to put zero or how many zeroes. These two approaches could be related to my earlier analysis of top-down and bottom-up models of reading in HIL : 'top-down' maths starts from the meaning of the sum in their own context (like "everyday maths"), whereas the 'bottom-up' approach stresses the importance of understanding how to write and manipulate the symbols within the sum. Sharda thus uses methods based on differing assumptions about mathematics to run her lesson. Unlike Alina however she is concerned to close the gap between the discourses of mathematics and everyday life. She also switches between Newari and Nepali to aid the women's understanding and encourages them to count on their knuckles as is common locally. In her classes, the women sit on the floor in small informal groups of friends and work with each other when doing sums. Sharda does not actively encourage or discourage them from helping each other like this. When a group starts doing something different, such as the couple counting in English, Sharda does not react except positively as in this case (to tell me they can count up to seventy).

The whole atmosphere in Sharda's mathematics class thus differs greatly from Alina's class described earlier. Sharda herself was previously an adult class participant and so relates to the women as equals (calling them by the familiar form of address as a friend rather than a teacher). Her teaching shows some elements of an ideological approach with the emphasis on collaborative learning, relating concepts to their familiar cultural context, trying to make mathematics less academic and related to their real-life calculations. For example, she began a lesson on weights by asking how many "pow" (local measure of weight) was equal to a kilogram, as she was aware that the women used pow rather than kilograms to buy food. She has a wider view of mathematics as encompassing everyday knowledge, rather than the academic maths in Alina's class. However Sharda's methods of explanation are no more practical than Alina's : she uses the blackboard to explain and encourages them to learn the operations in a mechanical way. In this respect, she does seem to hold the assumptions of the autonomous approach to mathematics : that the lessons should consist of a set of abstract skills to be mastered. As with literacy, the classes and methods were 'mixed' rather than easily labelled as 'autonomous' or 'ideological', 'academic' or 'functional'.

Though the kind of mathematics presented through HIL's and Save's literacy programmes could be seen as similar (addition, subtraction, division and multiplication sums), the way in which the facilitators chose to teach these concepts and use the given material was quite

different. How they decided to present mathematical ideas to the class (such as Sharda relating sums to participants' daily experiences) was partly due to the influence of their own backgrounds and relationship with the participants, their understanding of everyday mathematics in the local area, as well as due to the materials produced by the project. How far these characteristics can be meaningfully related to the New Literacy philosophy is debatable: for example, Sharda's relatively equal relationship, letting the students guide her lesson activities, could be seen as part of the New Literacy ideal around participatory education, but is more likely the influence of her close relationship with the participants as friends. In the concluding section, I look in detail at how far the kind of literacy and numeracy teaching taking place is influenced more by the specific conditions of an adult literacy class than by broader changes in literacy or numeracy ideology or approach.

The adult class versus school

A theme running through the above analysis has been the difference between adult class and school teaching. Through comparing HIL and Save and the difficulties of generalising about their approach to literacy, I suggested that no two adult classes will be the same and that the individual conditions within a literacy class influence what approach to literacy is adopted in practice. This section looks now at what **can** be generalised about adult literacy classes in relation to school teaching and how these factors influence how literacy is taught.

The adult literacy programmes cannot be seen in isolation from the school education system in the areas I describe. Joshi and Anderson's description (1994: 173) gives an idea of a typical local primary school: "The school buildings are very poor. Roofs leak, walls sag, pupils, many of whom have no desks, sit on the floor or mats or on benches. Blackboards of various sizes and a solitary piece of chalk are the usual teaching aids... Teaching methods extensively use lecturing and chanting; the textbooks are written by males, there being almost no women in curriculum development, and ... only 10.8% of the primary teaching force is female". The attitudes prevalent in the schools, which could be said roughly to correspond to an autonomous view of literacy and numeracy, have influenced the facilitators, staff and participants of literacy programmes. On several occasions in literacy classes, I watched participants used to the school approach bewildered by the new approaches to literacy teaching being introduced into adult classes. Binita, a young woman in the Arutar class was confused when confronted by a page of letters in random order and she reacted by asking her friends, where is ka, kha (ABC) in this book? In the Arutar class, there were always many children accompanying their mothers to study and they too, being used to the school approach to literacy teaching, would try to interpret the activities in a way that corresponded to the way they learnt in school. They "helped" their mothers by doing sums or writing for them, often undermining the more creative learning that was supposed to be taking place.

Thus many of the characteristics of the school classroom were transposed, inadvertently or deliberately into the literacy class: the ideas of 'homework', 'exam' and the emphasis on 'discipline' being examples of how school concepts shaped the Save adult literacy programme. In the HIL classes however, I rarely saw facilitators giving homework: they said that the women did not have time, so what was the point? This attitude seemed to be based on a closer understanding of the women's lives than in Arutar, where Alina continued giving homework and scolding the women even though it was obvious they had no free time outside the class. Sharda, a HIL facilitator told me the difference between HIL and other literacy programmes was that they did not have an exam: but then, she explained, "in HIL it is like a daily exam as we ask the girls so many questions all the time, we know if they have understood".

The Arutar participants seemed to hold similar beliefs about school and adult class education, in that the fact of attending the literacy class was considered beneficial in itself. I often heard children telling their parents it was not worth attending school as there was rarely a teacher, but the parents would shout at them to go anyway. A parallel situation seemed to be the number of women who went to the adult class even if they regularly slept through it or were so below the average level that they could not follow a word. They still believed that was something to be gained from simply attending (this contrasted with HIL where women who found it difficult dropped out as a reaction). However a major difference between school and adult class was that the literacy facilitators were aware they had to teach : in the schools, there seemed to be an assumption that most of the learning went on at home (hence the great emphasis put on "homework" by both parents and teachers). When my four year old son started to attend class one in Arutar school, the teacher had no idea how to start teaching him the letters of the alphabet from scratch : it seemed that the other children had already learnt informally from their brothers and sisters at home.

The regular supervision of Save and HIL classes consisted of inspection of quantifiable aspects like how they marked the register (which symbols they used), how many lanterns they had or how many women attended classes. The supervisors did not comment on their teaching methods or approach and, in the case of HIL, gave little feed-back to individual facilitators. Both HIL and Save gave professional support on how to teach in their training programmes, but the fact that this was rarely followed up when the supervisors visited classes affected how and whether new methods were used in teaching. In this respect, these literacy programmes contrasted greatly with Western systems of educational supervision which include qualitative aspects, though were similar to Nepali school systems (evaluating teacher and pupil absenteeism and physical conditions of the schools).

A big difference between school and adult literacy programme is the extent to which both are introducing literacy practices outside the classroom. As both HIL and Save ran literacy classes as just one part of a larger development programme, there is a sense in which the literacy practices taking place **outside** the classroom were equally or more important than the class-based reading and writing. Barton's (1994a: 39) distinction between "imposed" and "self-generated" literacy practices is pertinent here. Particularly in the case of Save, many of the

literacy practices being introduced to women's groups sponsored by the organisation (such as reporting and accounting methods) were unfamiliar and "imposed". These practices outside the classroom would influence the kind of literacy being encouraged and discussed inside the class. Willinsky suggests that school teachers following the New Literacy approach should take account of the literacy practices taking place outside the institution. A further dimension in the literacy programmes I describe is that Save and HIL are able to a greater extent to control what happens outside the literacy class in terms of other sectoral activities in their own programme.

Conclusion

The 'label' given to a certain literacy approach, such as Freirean or functional, may tell us less about the kind of literacy teaching in a literacy programme than other factors such as the facilitator's background or the organisational structure. Ideas about the New Literacy in the school context appear to be different in the adult literacy programmes I observed, pointing to the importance of considering what happens when concepts such as LGM and whole language are transposed to a completely different institution. Equally important are the implications of transposing methods or ideas developed in schools in the West to a developing country context: issues which I look at more directly in the next chapter. The differing characteristics of an adult literacy class, like the relationship of teacher to students, the fact that the course runs for a limited time and may not be evaluated in the same way as schools, mean that New Literacy concepts take on a different "meaning" (Fullan, 1991). The teacher's and students' changing relationship to texts may not be the result of a philosophy, so much as practical conditions or constraints, such as HIL's low cost approach where they decided to print their own duplicated lesson sheets. LGM changed in meaning within Save to become an examining mechanism due to organisational structures (the need for a testing mechanism) and staff's previous school experiences. Key concepts from the New Literacy or new approaches to mathematics (such as whole language or real versus academic mathematics) may not work as descriptive labels, but at an analytical level, they can enable a class observer like myself to interpret what kind of literacy and numeracy teaching and learning is taking place.

Rather than suggesting that the New Literacy or new approaches to mathematics have not worked successfully, this chapter has highlighted the factors that influence how such methodologies change in practice; such as facilitator/class relationships, training and supervision mechanisms, literacy and numeracy practices outside the class, theoretical models of literacy and numeracy. Planners cannot assume that a particular literacy approach is linked to a certain development outcome (e.g. Freirean literacy leading to empowerment or functional literacy leading to health awareness). In the HIL and Save classrooms, literacy teaching was more affected by social factors such as relationships between facilitator and class or the participants' views of education, than by planned curriculum changes. New literacy approaches,

such as LGM, were transformed in practice and were seen as linked with 'development' more because of their Western theoretical origins than the functional skills gained.

CHAPTER SIX

A carpet factory in Sanagow: these women study by night
at the HIL literacy classes

CHAPTER SIX

"CHANGE IS COMING BECAUSE OF MORE PROGRESS IN EDUCATION": LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT IDEOLOGIES

Introduction: Chameli's Song

Change is coming because of more progress in education

It is education that opens our eyes within
Through education is the only way for the illiterate to speak out

Change is coming because of more progress in education

Through education you can see all the amazing things that are happening in this world
Within six months, I learnt to read the alphabet and write a few words

Change is coming because of more progress in education

It would be so nice to have studied at school
We spent our lives pounding and grinding grain, collecting firewood and fodder

Change is coming because of more progress in education

At last when Save and Care[33] *came, our eyes were opened*
Through this important education, we were able to write our names

Change is coming because of more progress in education

We could also write letters by ourselves to our husbands
We could read letters from abroad by ourselves

Change is coming because of more progress in education

It would have been so nice to study in a cheli beti[34] *class as well*
If we had been able to study at that time, our eyes would have been opened within

Change is coming because of more progress in education

The more you read, the more you want to read
The more things you learn about, the more active you are

Change is coming because of more progress in education

Education is this curious light of development
It is father's and mother's fault for not sending us to the village school.

Fieldnotes: 22/2/96, Thumi (Save)

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[33] Care refers to the international non governmental organisation, Care Nepal, which also organised development activities in the Thumi area.

[34] Cheli beti means literally 'young girl' but it has come to refer to the early morning literacy classes held for out-of-school girls in rural areas.

This song was composed by Chameli Ghimre, a seventeen year old woman at a Save advanced literacy class in Thumi, an area six hours walk from Arughat. She wrote the song for her friends to perform at Education Day, an annual singing and dancing festival at the local high school where school children and adult literacy participants would compete for prizes. Chameli, ironically (in view of the song's words), was one of the few women in the village who had studied at school when she was younger. She had to leave school at sixth grade when she had an arranged marriage and came to Thumi from her natal home. Her husband still studies as a boarder at the high school where she used to go, but she now lives with her aged parents-in-law to help with the agricultural and domestic work. She joined the adult class as, unlike school, it ran during the evenings when she was relatively free. Chameli writes a lot in her free time and wants to learn more about women's rights. Though she hasn't got a book, she told me, "just a few suggestions come in the class": "we need to know how to come in front".

Chameli's song could be seen as belonging to a new genre. All the songs at the Education Day festival were very similar, echoing the message that education is "the light of development" and that the international aid agencies had brought this light to Thumi. The images of development that come across in Chameli's song, of illiterates gaining a voice through education, studying at school as opposed to pounding and grinding grain, becoming active through learning, reading letters from abroad, belong to a discourse which is familiar to most people in the area. The above images may actually contradict the women's lived experience (no one in this group had received letters from abroad, Chameli had studied at school but was still pounding rice every day) but they all recognise the ideas of 'development' which the international agencies have been promoting here. Eagleton (1991: 56) points out that an ideology can "achieve legitimacy by universalizing... itself": in Chameli's song, values and interests (such as reading letters from abroad) "...which are in fact specific to a certain place and time are projected as the values and interests of all humanity" (ibid.). Rather than dismissing Chameli's song as development propaganda, this chapter will focus on how these ideas of development and her expression of them, her experience as an overworked daughter-in-law and her desire to learn more about how "to come in front" all fit together.

Previous chapters looked directly at educational issues around literacy teaching, such as how language choices are made in relation to stated language policy or how techniques from the New Literacy were transposed into the Nepali adult literacy context. Participants, facilitators and planners could be seen to hold certain assumptions about 'development' : such as the link between English language and modernisation or about the kind of literacy that women need. Ideologies of development - such as the "productionist" view of education underlying policies linking women's literacy and health (Carter, 1996) - influenced how the literacy programmes evolved in practice and the power dynamics in the classrooms and NGOs concerned. In this chapter, I look beyond the literacy classes, at Save's and HIL's programmes as a whole, to see how their ideologies of development, literacy and gender are perceived by the women participants. Analysing the concepts of development underlying the NGO programmes is

essential for understanding the pedagogical and planning issues discussed earlier and to decide *whose development* emerges through Save's and HIL's programmes.

Development ideologies in Nepal

The theoretical concepts around development as a discourse (Chapter 1) can enable us to analyse the dominant development ideologies[35] in Nepal and to discuss the development discourse at both national and local levels. The purpose is to understand the framework within which HIL and Save workers were operating, the kind of development they were promoting, and also to explore the language with which village participants were familiar (as Chameli's opening song suggested).

Pigg (1992) discusses how in Nepal, "development has a different, more profoundly social meaning, a meaning that weaves bikas[36] into the fabric of local life and patterns Nepalese national society.." (ibid.: 496). She links this meaning of bikas to the ideology of modernisation which in Nepal is "not simply a matter of western influence but a matter of simultaneous nepalization and globalization" (ibid.: 512). She defines bikas as being linked to concepts of the city and analyses how "concepts of development have changed concepts of the village for people in Nepal" (ibid.: 495). Bikas is quantifiable, "in common usage, it connotes things" (such as clinics or water projects) and generally speaking, villages are places of "relatively little bikas" (ibid.: 499). Development is associated with the English language and "bikas comes to them (villagers) with its English language labels firmly attached" (ibid.: 503). Pigg discusses how images created by policy makers "coalesce into a typical generic village, turning all the villages of rural Nepal into the village.." (ibid.: 491) and how development workers then work with a village/ bikas contrast (rather than the village/ town polarity) which reinforces their view of the village as "out there" (ibid.: 503). .

Pigg's article usefully analyses how *development* (bikas) takes on different meanings in the Nepali context and so begins to affect the way both planners and rural dwellers view villages. However, her analysis does fall into the generalisations that she accuses policy makers of, in associating the ideas of bikas exclusively with modernisation ideologies : my own observations at local and policy level, suggest that the development discourses are of a more complex nature. In 1990, the partyless Panchayat regime with the King as supreme head, was replaced by a democratically elected government. Together with changes in development ideologies of international aid agencies, this more open political climate has meant the discourse in Nepal is characterised by concepts and terms from dependency and developmentalist

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[35] "Ideology" is not used in a pejorative sense in this chapter; rather, Eagleton's definition of ideology as "a peculiarly 'action-oriented' discourse" (Eagleton, 1991: 29).

[36] Bikas means 'development' in Nepali language.

ideologies, as well as modernisation. For example, 'empowerment', 'participation' and 'gender equality' have now become part of development 'speak' at all levels. What is still relevant in Pigg's analysis is the identification of bikas with Westernisation, though this may no longer be the influence of modernisation theories alone.

Western influence (and the backing of foreign aid agencies) is particularly apparent in the field of women and development. In 1990, ODA funded gender training for about thirty Nepali women who were then to act as key trainers, disseminating gender planning and policy methods into NGOs and government departments. Many of the original trainers now run their own NGOs focused on women's issues and several have written training manuals or books on Nepalese women (e.g. Subedi, 1993, **Nepali Women Rising**). These writers seem quite aware and accepting of the Western origins of the gender ideologies they promote: "Women's empowerment and women's development is not an indigenous concept. It has not yet germinated here. The seed of it was dispersed in Nepal in 1975, by the UN through the declaration of the year 1975 as the International Women's Year. So, the concept of women's development is still hanging in the air which has to enter into the ground of Nepalese soil to grow like a tree" (Shrestha, S.L. 1994: 23). The gender and development discourse prevalent in NGOs and women's components of programmes like Save is thus characterised by the adoption of Western terms and concepts (see Chapter 4).

Literacy Linkages' (1994) distance learning materials for literacy facilitators illustrate how much of the training is in understanding Western gender concepts, rather than analysing local situations in relation to gender. The gender module spends much time explaining "key terminologies" such as "women's subordination", "male bias", and is written in academic language using terms like "deconstruction" and "ethnographer"[37]. The assumption underlying most gender training initiatives is that "women have interiorised the discrimination, subordination, oppression and exploitation which they experience and they go through their lives like somnambulists, walking in their sleep" (Shrestha, 1994: 40). Participatory Gender Analysis "is a technique of awakening critical awareness" (ibid.) so that women can be "awakened from this state of stupor". Like illiterates within the autonomous model of literacy, Nepali women are viewed as powerless and ignorant until they receive gender awareness training.

Worldwide, the dominant women and development discourse is of the "homogeneous Third World woman" (Mohanty, 1991), the passive recipient of development programmes. Rather than viewing women as having consciousness of their own situation, the starting point is that "change does not come automatically, it has to be initiated by someone else" (Shrestha, 1994: 51). In Nepal, this attitude has influenced the kind of research carried out, which tends to consist of quantitative attempts to measure women's status (rather than ethnographic studies which reject the "static" notion of women's status (White, 1989) in favour of a contested image of gender). An example is the USAID-funded **Status of Women In Nepal** study, which was

[37] The copy that I have, which was still in draft form, was written in English with the intention of later translating it into Nepali language (though the writer is Nepali).

carried out from 1979 - 81. The study found that women's "contribution to household production and income was found to be at a par with men, both in terms of labor input as well as in decision making roles" (Acharya, 1994: 1). The follow-up to this study (Acharya, 1994) aimed to present a statistical profile on Nepalese women in order to inform policy makers. The adoption of indicators such as fertility rates, literacy rates, school enrolments, shows that to some degree the policy areas had already been predicted in terms of those usually associated with an efficiency approach to women's development (population, health, education). The dominating WID discourse, the "productionist discourse" associated with women's literacy and health, had already determined "what could be said and even imagined" (Escobar, 1995: 24).

Having shown in general terms the kind of gender and development discourses with which planners, implementers and participants might be familiar in Nepal, I will look now at how these discourses shaped the case study programmes and which concepts of development were disputed or transformed. I earlier considered the literacy course as a transmitter of ideologies (for example, how the use of English language was perceived as a gender issue because of the link with modernisation ideologies). This section looks more directly at how the programmes as a whole, through introducing new literacy and oral practices, aimed to reinforce the dominant development discourse. I begin with a session from a Save training course for literacy facilitators where the objective was to define 'development'.

What is bikas?

There were 15 participants (one female, from Arutar) and when I arrived in the afternoon, they were having a session on 'What is bikas?' (development). They had discussions in groups and had to draw on flip chart paper their ideas of 'bikas'.

Group 2 drew: a latrine (with 'toilet' written on it - i.e. the English word in Devanagari script, not 'charpi'[38]), an orange tree, an onion, electricity, health post, tap stand.

Group 3 : [pictures of] school, people doing work together, drinking water, path, bridge, electricity, irrigation, police station, nursery, health post

Group 1: radio, telephone, school, health post, store, money, bridge

Only group 1 drew pictures without words and when they saw the others' pictures with labels, they wanted to add 'names' but were not allowed to. The trainer criticised their pictures of the telephone and money for not being clear.

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[38] Nepali for 'latrine'

Each group then had to write a definition of development and list what it meant in words, by looking at the others' pictures. Again they used paper and felt pens (all brought from Gorkha as not available here...). One group did this task very badly - they were completely unable to write clearly on a sheet of paper and wrote such huge letters that they could only fit two or three words on each page of the flip chart. Devendra (trainer) ... told them to stop being stupid and do it properly. They didn't have much idea about layout (and all the pictures were really tiny) but this didn't seem to be the purpose of the session - though Devendra did help them to stand at the side of the picture when presenting [so as not to block the view].

.... The last session turned into a lecture on 'bikas'. Each group presented, then could be asked questions by the others (no-one did) then were clapped by the whole group...

Discussion:

Group 1 - Education is first priority, then health

Group 2 - Bikas = provision of new facilities.

Devendra teaches a new word, sanchar (message) which some people mistake for sansar (world) and the man presenting was very embarrassed.

Group 3 - Bikas = things to help with problems in people's lives. First is co-operation, then drinking water.

Devendra asks, what is yatayat (transport)? - not everyone knows. He stresses that we should consider individual development as well as village development. He criticised one group for leaving out 'education'. They say it was a mistake. Devendra says you can define bikas using only two words: sukratmak pariwortan[39] *(positive change). Nobody understood these words, so he gave the example of someone bringing alcohol into a teetotal village - this would be negative change! He then listed all the basic needs and draws:*

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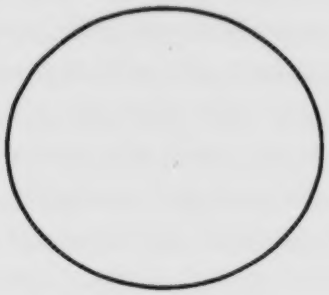
[39] These are very Sanskritised words, belonging to H register Nepali - see discussion on diglossic nature of the Nepali language in Chapter 4.

/F]UFL [= diseased, in Devanagari script]



UF/La [= poor, in Devanagari script]

He says the circle has to be 'broken' (using the English word) so that the poor are made rich and the diseased well (the guidebook refers to Paolo Freire & the culture of silence at this point). Devendra defined the difference between social and physical development [as being like the difference between] medicine and building bridges. Everyone is silent as he talks and answers his questions in chorus as in a school. (e.g. "What is development?" "Positive change")

Fieldnotes: 12/10/95, Arughat (Save)

This account gives an insight into the "overlap between professional developers' and local discourses" (Hobart, ibid.): we are very much aware of the differences between the trainer's definition of 'development' (abstract, academic - "positive change") and the participants' (concrete - schools, roads, electricity). The "overlap" (or perhaps, gap) is apparent not just in what is said explicitly about development, but the underlying messages given by the way the session is run. **How** Devendra's ideology of development is being transferred is as significant as what he actually says.

The participants' drawings in the first activity tend to depict the "quantifiable development" that Pigg identified with a villager's view of bikas. As she mentions, bikas comes attached with English labels : group 2 writes 'toilet' on the picture of a latrine. The other pictures are linked to Save inputs : fruit trees, vegetable seeds, tap stands, reforestation programmes, infrastructure development. Money, electricity, telephone and radio are kinds of bikas not necessarily associated with development agencies, but with individual advancement and narrowing the gap between village and city. The pictures fall into two groups: development as a "promise" (Illich, 1992: 90) (money, electricity) and development as it is seen in the area (Save inputs). The actual activity (of drawing rather than writing) limits how the participants

can define 'development' (pictures tend to be of 'things' rather than abstract ideas like "people doing work together") so they ask permission to add words to the pictures. Once the trainees are able to use words too (in the later discussion), group 3 defines bikas in more abstract terms : "co-operation" is one of the themes stressed by agencies such as Save when discussing development initiatives. The trainees, who are all from nearby villages, are aware that they should focus on the development messages associated with Save.

The session moves quickly on from drawing pictures to an academic lecture on Freire's cycle of poverty, suggesting an association between 'development' and academic language, particularly as Devendra starts to use Sanskritised Nepali in his definition of development as "positive change". His use of a diagram showing Freire's circle linking poverty and disease is not so much to explain a theory, but as a symbol of the theoretical side of development. He becomes more direct in presenting the messages given by Save's literacy programme: education as the key to development, village versus individual development, social versus physical development. His story illustrating the meaning of "negative change" as being alcohol coming into a teetotal village reinforces one of Save's strongest messages : that alcohol (and card playing) are the opposite of bikas. Devendra's lecture concentrates on teaching new terms or vocabulary (such as 'communication', 'transport'), since the trainees are already familiar with the messages about development.

The messages underlying the way the session is run, the hidden curriculum, also tell us a lot about the development discourse. Devendra's interaction with the trainees, despite the use of participatory methods (as I discussed in Chapter 5) is similar to that of a teacher with school children. He raises his voice and is concerned to demonstrate his superior knowledge of academic Nepali and theoretical concepts of development. We are aware of the hierarchical nature of his relationship with the trainees, which becomes symbolised through his abstract definitions of 'development' being preferred to their concrete suggestions. He, as the professional developer, is "the producer of expert discourses" (Escobar, 1995: 182). The training methods and materials also give a message about 'development': the trainees are not familiar with the idea of group work, drawing or using materials like felt pens and masking tape. From their point of view, the session is also about learning to use new methods and materials to express themselves (they did not know how to write clearly on the flip charts). These methods and materials, which are not used in schools, are associated with Save's training courses and also seen as 'development'.

This analysis brings the focus onto the relationship between development discourses at the local level : between Devendra's professional discourse and the trainees who draw on their own observations locally of Save's and other 'development'. The Save ideology of development is presented to the trainees both directly (in lecture form) and indirectly through the methods used. This chapter begins by looking at this "interface" (Villareal, 1992) between developers and developed in both HIL and Save, but moves on later to analyse the ideologies of development that participants follow outside the programme.

Bringing women into development

Looking more closely at development ideologies underlying the Save and HIL programmes, particularly around the perceived link between women's literacy and development, I aim at this stage to articulate these ideologies from the developers' perspective and analyse the ways in which the development discourse was presented to participants. Save and HIL differed greatly in the extent to which a coherent ideology could be seen: Save, as an international NGO, had a clearly worked out development strategy with agreed objectives amongst staff, many of whom had been exposed to some theoretical development debates (as Devendra's presentation showed above). By contrast, HIL as an agency did not appear to have an explicit ideology and because of the lack of any documentation by the agency itself, I had to piece together fragmented evidence of development ideologies. This key difference between the two organisations has led to me adopting contrasting methods of analysis for each case study (see Chapter 2). In the case of Save, I can analyse specific events when their ideology was most apparent in interactions I observed (such as Devendra's training session). However within HIL, since the situation was not so obviously 'them' and 'us' (developer and developed), I do not analyse specific events in such depth, but rather use events structured by myself as researcher (such as formal interviews, questionnaires and visual activities) and set up to explore the 'interface' between different ideologies of development.

Group formation : women's development the Save way

Save's objective in running literacy classes is as an entry point to women's development activities. Staff see their strategy as a series of steps: the literacy class leading to formal registration of a women's group which then receives training and carries out income generating activities. The following meeting took place in Karshe, a Gurung village six hours walk from Arughat. The Save productivity sector staff, Sahana, and Ramesh, had come to Karshe for "group formation" purposes : the women had been attending literacy courses over three years so were now seen as ready to become an official Save women's group.

> *We arrived in Karshe at about 8 p.m. and sat in the bamboo house that they had constructed for meetings and the adult class....*
>
> *Sahana asks where all the other women are (there are only about five here) - that's what groups are about, if you can't come to a meeting, you should tell each other or if you go to a training, you should tell each other what happened.*
>
> *Pabitra (facilitator's daughter) : father said you have learnt new things so you can do new work now. But you can't get everything at once, you have to do things slowly. Before we couldn't study, but now we can read the letters (of the alphabet).*

Sahana: Other castes cover their faces when they speak, but you are much ahead. For example, in Wayek they do that. You are in front already.

Pabitra: At first we were like that in the adult class. We used to hide inside our scarves.

Sahana: Go slowly and you will understand. If you spend all day gazing into a stream, at some time you will get a fish. So if we do that [one thing] all day long, we will get something.

One woman falls asleep and the others wake her up noisily.

Pabitra: We thought noone comes to our class and we were surprised when the hakim (boss) came, and that he is just like us, not like a hakim (they were referring to Devendra who came to the workshop). On the first day we were so scared and by the second day we could even talk with him.

Sahana: Before this, Save only gave adult classes, not information about forming groups....I heard before from friends how good your Karshe group is so I wanted to come and visit, but we came late.

She asks whether they have big hopes from Save - a tap or a bridge?

A woman says: we all want irrigation - for the fields, that's why we need a group.

Sahana : We can't fulfil hopes lie that for big things. Agadiko gulo, pachiko titho (before it is sweet, afterwards bitter) - we say in advance what we can do. You can have knitting, making clothes, as those are within our programme. We can give training, but not for everyone in the group. You have to decide who to send for training for.. (She asks me what is "skill development" [using English word] in Nepali?). Do you want to increase the 3,000 rupees you have? How much do you make every month?

Facilitator : They earn a bit through singing.

Fieldnotes: Save (Thumi), 24/2/96

The encounter between Save staff and the women's group illustrated many of the theoretical concepts introduced earlier. Escobar's description of the development discourse "crystallizing into practices that contribute to regulating the everyday goings and comings of people in the Third World.." (1995: 216) could be seen in the procedures that Save has introduced for running meetings and group activities, as well as the kind of development that they promote. Sahana dismisses the idea of irrigation projects for a women's group, suggesting instead that they ask for small scale projects like knitting or sewing. We can see here the dominant WID ideology described by Mbilinyi, based on a limited view of the areas in which

women can and do work. Another example arose at a Save agricultural training programme I attended on 'off-season vegetable farming' where there was only one female participant (and 21 men). When I asked the trainer why, he said that the training was for commercial farmers and that women don't do that much: women's groups get a different kind of agricultural training. (Fieldnotes: 10/1/96, Arughat).

The hierarchical relationship between Save staff and villagers was evident throughout the Karshe meeting (Pabitra describes how frightened they were to speak to the hakim) and was reflected in the register of Nepali spoken. As the following extract shows, the facilitator had to act as translator for the women who were not familiar with development terminology:

Sahana: We are ready to help you, you in front, us behind. Do you know what a group is?

Facilitator: they don't know it well

Sahana: What are group objectives? It's like Save USA come in (asks Ramesh what date the programme started) and they worked with the Lions' Club (says the word 'club' in English).

The facilitator says: they do not understand that - put it in Nepali, it is like a group. We don't have 'club', that is a new word here.

Sahana: It's like education and adult class (starts to explain objectives)

Another man: from fifteen years old

Facilitator: they added that later

Sahana: activities - do you understand that? (the facilitator explains the word). Now we are doing a meeting, that is an activity.

Facilitator: It's like problem means 'dhuke' (trouble)

Sahana's use of development terminology and English words like 'club' throughout her discussion distances her from the women in the group: the facilitator reminds her, "we don't have 'club', that is a new word here". He helps her to explain development planning terms like 'objective' and 'problem' (both in Nepali) in everyday language. The meeting becomes like a language lesson at times. Code-switching between different registers of Nepali and between English and Nepali establishes power relationships between the Save staff and villagers, also between men and women in this meeting.

During the discussion in this meeting, a certain tension could be identified between the expressed philosophy and the unsaid ideas. That the villagers and Save had a client/ patron relationship was clear in the opening conversation where Sahana asked what the women wanted

from Save, then replied in terms of what Save could "give". It was immediately apparent that Save set the terms and conditions of their agreement and that both sides recognised the "rules", such as adult participants needing to be above fifteen years old. However the situation was complicated by the discourse of participatory development that Sahana adopted when she told the women, "you are in front, we are behind". During the rest of the meeting, the tension increased as the facilitator disputed the rule that the group should include a certain percentage of married women in order to ensure sustainability (girls move to their husband's home when they get married). As the next extract shows, there was a contradiction between the manner in which the meeting was conducted and the ideas of participatory development expressed, and also between local beliefs about caste and gender and the dominant Save ideology:

Facilitator : the problem is that Gurungs are like latos (dumb, mentally retarded)

He, Sahana and Ramesh start to discuss caste - that Sahana is pure Chhetri ... and that Gopal... is a mixed type Chhetri as his grandfather was a Brahmin who married a Baram (Magar).

Pabitra comes in and says that our food is ready and she will bring it here. The father orders everyone out of the hut and she brings in rice and chicken.....

A man has fallen fast asleep (the men came back in while we ate, but not the women). We resume the meeting (10 p.m.).

Sahana: It's like Save's programme. We go to a place where two or more women meet together [to facilitator] - do they understand this?

She starts lecturing: It's an objective.. that means..

Facilitator: Desire...

Sahana: You should have one desire in a group, not many. If you throw stones in the dark, you don't know where they will go... Now, what is a group?

Woman: If many people sit in one place

Ramesh: What about us here?

Woman: If 1,2,3,4,5, are..

Gopal : If more than two are..

Sahana: Sometimes you understand, sometimes you don't understand even after six months. What are the advantages of having a group? (She asks Ramesh to read from his notebook. I notice he also has the flip charts about group formation but does not use them).

Ramesh starts reading from his list of advantages...

Sahana [to the women]: Just say what you feel (silence)

Gopal starts doing the minutes - a list of all the women in the group so that they can sign for attendance. Ramesh says he should put their ages too because of the problem that many are not married (he says one is divorced).

Ramesh : only eight are married so it does not fit the criteria

Sahana: Special case

Facilitator: If we have the group here, our unmarried girls will go.

Sahana: (joking) They will have to look here for a husband ...

Facilitator: Three organisations have come here. Foreign organisations give so much money but our country is not able to use it. Many foreign organisations come to Nepal but there are only three in our VDC. We Nepalis only think of our own house and family. We look at the individual dhuke (troubles) but don't want to go society's way. He does a Namaste (salute) to Sahana and says, listen if you want to or else leave....

Gopal : Change will be difficult if the group are all unmarried

Sahana: According to Save, you have got to have wives in the group.

Ramesh : Previously we had a group in Kaleri and now they have all gone off to marry, now none are left. Even the chairperson has gone to marry and all the officers there were unmarried.

Sahana [to women]: This is the office notebook, to do things the official way. What do you think?

All : OK

Sahana asks one individual who is married (with baby asleep on her lap) to be the chairperson. She does not agree. The facilitator tells her off for not co-operating.....

It is 1130 pm and everyone is half asleep. Ramesh starts to state the advantages of groups again.

Ramesh: You can take advantage from Care or RSDC [other NGOs working in the same area] if you have a group. If you need water or agriculture, go to Care. If you need education or a clinic, go to Save.... If you have a group, then if one person goes from the group, the skill is not lost. It's like Save - if I go, another person comes. It is not based on individuals....

Sahana [to the women]: when do you have time to come to our office?

Pabitra asks her father and he says it is a busy time for ploughing.

Sahana: What about the 15th?

Pabitra: But father will be away at the training.

Sahana: We need three officers to come to the office. Now in Swaragow, Care have already made a group.

She says it is not automatic that the group will be formed - they have to see all the records, minuting, registers. She asks when they want the training (group formation training) - which time is less busy according to their agricultural work, and says it will be good if father could collect the letter about the training as they need reliable people to deliver them. Sahana says they now have to read through the minutes and all sign.

Fieldnotes: 24/2/96, Thumi (Save)

This meeting has many parallels with the training session that I discussed earlier (on development): though not in the classroom, the Save staff adopted a lecture method to convey the advantages of groups and the whole session revolved around an academic definition of what a group was. It was apparent that staff felt they had to *teach* the development ideology that lay behind their women's programme. The definition of a group that Ramesh and Sahana give links to ideas about development planning : the women should have a common goal that they pursue together and through being in a group they can share skills and knowledge. Individual development takes second place to co-operation and working as a group (as in Devendra's distinction between the individual and society). The different priorities of the Save staff as compared to the villagers comes out in their discussion of the group criteria: that there are not enough married women to make it sustainable over the years. Ramesh's and Sahana's adherence to the rules ("this is the office notebook, to do things the official way") means they forget the attempt at participatory development and try to co-opt the only married woman present into being chairperson. She refuses to co-operate: like the other woman who fell asleep, the only signs of them disputing the ideas that are being put forth by Save staff and the facilitator are non-verbal.

The belief that women's development should be conducted in groups, not as individuals, is not unique to Save and has become a strong WID ideology:

"Over the last few decades, the formation of economic interest groups at grassroots level has become a major development strategy in Africa... While governments tend to see the potential of a group approach for mobilising political support or export production, NGOs see it as a means of strengthening the

organisational capacity of the rural poor and thereby creating checks... on government" (ACORD, 1992:1).

Robinson (1991: 121) describes how group formation has become "something of a creed for Indian NGOs". In Asia, the Grameen Bank savings and credit groups of Bangladesh have become a model for many development programmes and have become associated with women's (as opposed to men's) development. In Nepal, the formation of women's groups seems closer to the ACORD's analysis of government-sponsored groups ("mobilising political support") in that they imply concepts of "discipline", as the discussion of Save's rules and criteria suggests above. The Save emphasis on discipline is not however as visible as in the Grameen Bank centres which are more regimented in style.

Once a Save group is formed, the women are expected to conduct meetings in a certain way, learning new literacy practices such as keeping minutes (as Sahana asks Ramesh to do). The formal registration of the group (mentioned by Sahana at the end of this meeting) also involves a lot of paperwork with Save staff reviewing the records, minuting and registers. It is clear that without written evidence, a Save women's group cannot operate. The emphasis put on written records as superior to oral practices reflects the autonomous beliefs about literacy discussed in Chapter 3. Entering Save's development discourse through becoming a group implies that the women will learn new literacy practices as well as new spoken development terminology. The group officers are invited to attend a training programme on how to fill in the record forms required by Save central office[40], in other words, to learn development administration techniques.

Throughout the meeting, the majority of the women were silent : only Pabitra and her father spoke to the Save staff and they both recognise the development ideology that Save promotes. Earlier on in the meeting, Pabitra readily took up the idea of the silent, passive women who hide in their veils (this is the stereotyped image of the undeveloped Nepali woman, similar to White's description of the "Bangladeshi woman" as a creation of the discourse). Her father introduces the similar stereotype of the dumb Gurung (an ethnic group traditionally considered outside the Hindu caste system), ironically ridiculing his own caste, in order to distance himself as a 'developed' Gurung. His use of development ideology is deliberate and culminates in his threat ("listen if you want to or else leave") to Sahana who seems likely to resist their demand to become a group because there are not enough married women to meet the Save criteria. His gesture of Namaste (hands together as if praying, the traditional greeting in Nepal) has a double edge : the gesture can be interpreted as beseeching or as "no thank you" (i.e. rejecting Save). As his plea turns into a more urgent appeal to her, he plays on the development messages that Nepalis think of individual not society good and that Nepal does not make use of

[40] See Appendix XII for examples of the forms that groups should fill in and return to Save office monthly.

foreign aid, as if to align himself with her as a development professional who knows the discourse.

The above analysis focuses on the ways in which the facilitator and his daughter tried to use the development discourse put forward by Save staff to their own advantage. I have conveyed the them/ us basis of this discourse in terms of developer versus developed. However, in the quoted fieldnotes, there are also several instances of the Save staff accepting the ideology of gender prevalent in this village : for example, Pabitra is sent to cook and bring in the dinner, at which point the women all disappear. During the meeting, more men than women spoke, and it was clear that as the father of Pabitra, the facilitator was also the group leader (Pabitra often began her speech with "father says.."). These relationships seemed to contradict the Save ideal of autonomous women's groups, yet the Save staff did not seem surprised that most of these women did not participate in the meeting. Father kept the records of the group's finances and appeared to run the meetings for the women. Sahana's dismissal of Ramesh's worries about the group not meeting Save criteria ("special case") could also be linked to more deep-seated beliefs that she could not deny the facilitator's requests having being given such good hospitality (our chicken dinner!). As in my discussion of educational ideologies in Chapter 5, it is apparent here that other non-Western ideologies compete with the dominant Save discourse and influence the staff's behaviour. Although they are regarded as more 'knowing' than the local people, Ramesh and Sahana are also recognised to be familiar with the local constructions of gender and caste (as the discussion on their caste revealed), so the 'us' / 'them' distinction, between 'developed' and 'developer', breaks down.

The underlying ideology about women in development that shapes Save's development programme as a whole is thus expressed not just in words and rules, but through practices associated with development administration, such as formation of groups, keeping minutes and records. The Save staff see their job as to educate villagers to adopt the practices symbolising women's development, to understand the limits set by their rules and criteria and to learn the development terminology. The language that the staff use in the meeting suggests that the women are passive and ignorant (Sahana asks the facilitator in front of the women "do they understand this?"). The development education process takes place through meetings which resemble lecture sessions - but the formality of these sessions allows for the 'development activity' to fit easily into the existing framework of relationships and events. The idea of a women's meeting does not need to disturb the local division of labour and responsibilities between men and women, illustrating White's argument (1992: 26) that we should recognise "the flexibility of identity" rather than assuming that local gender relations are "set and specifiable".

Exploring development ideologies in Lalitpur (HIL)

Several major differences between the two case study programmes help to explain why I found it much more difficult to work out the development ideology being promoted through the HIL programme, as compared to Save. HIL, unlike Save, has had a variety of donors funding the project : as well as giving money, the donors to a great extent determine the objectives of the programme, based on their own ideology of development. Currently the literacy component is supported by HIL, an NGO working in community health, but previously the same group of literacy workers were supported by SPACE, an NGO with more radical objectives of empowering oppressed carpet workers. The current programme is supposed to be presenting ideas of modern Western medicine to women, who are seen as the main health providers in the family. Like Save's ideology of groups, these concepts tended to be presented in a formal academic way, encouraging the women to memorise the names of vaccinations or symptoms of diseases (see Chapter 4 opening).

The fact that HIL works in semi-urban areas just outside the Kathmandu Valley with more commercial activity and communications has also influenced to what degree a development message (e.g. Save's 'group' ideology) can be a powerful force. Unlike the Save Arughat area, in HIL's Lalitpur area there are many competing opportunities for 'development', including the private sector. HIL works almost exclusively with Newari communities who also have their traditional development institutions, the guthis. These societies, which are to be found in every village, consisted of a male representative from every family. Every month, families are required to pay contributions to the guthi and the money is used to support funerals, weddings etc. There is a strong tradition of communal support, with families using neighbours' help to build houses rather than hiring labour. The traditional Newari ideology, of "co-operation", savings and credit groups, can thus be seen as similar to the development group ideology being promoted by Save in Arughat. However, there was also a strong belief in the Lalitpur communities that women could never come to guthi meetings and there was more opposition to women gaining office jobs or going to formal education institutions. Significantly, some husbands saw the literacy classes as a threat if the women were going simply to improve themselves (one man even tore up his wife's book so she could not go). Women who worked in tea shops or shops set up by their husbands were however encouraged to go to improve their record keeping skills.

The ideas that Pigg describes in relation to bikas, as a dichotomy between the city and the village, thus became more complex in the context of HIL's programme in a semi-urban area. Bikas is not just associated with development organisations like HIL in this area, but more with individual initiatives or getting jobs in private companies. A large proportion of the women participants' husbands worked outside the area, usually in Kathmandu city. A small survey that I conducted amongst Sanagow and Changanathali class participants showed that of 21 married women, 15 husbands worked away from the village (in offices, shops, tourism and factories) whilst the other 6 were involved in home-based activities like agriculture and cloth weaving. HIL's health programme was seen as another opportunity for potential employment as health extension workers, particularly for young educated girls whose only other option was to work

in the carpet factories or weave straw mats at home. The idea of a women getting an office job (such as the men sought) was considered laughable: when I asked about the women in Changanathali village who had passed the School Leaving Certificate[41], the class participants told me that they were still at home and that "girls never get office jobs" (fieldnotes, 20/3/96). In the Sanagow carpet factory, I asked girls from the class more directly about the link between literacy and employment:

> *I tried another tack and asked if they could get a better job after studying at the adult class - Chirku laughed and said, we are all farmers' daughters, what job can we get? Someone else said, if they had been boys they could have got an office job. In the village they can't get any job though.*
>
> *Fieldnotes: 12/2/96, Sanagow (HIL)*

Though the participants of the literacy classes did not see their night time education as leading to an escape from the carpet factories, Sharda, one of the Sanagow facilitators, had progressed from being a student in the adult classes run by SPACE (she had attended their programme thirteen years ago) to becoming the present teacher[42]. She described to me how SPACE had given them the opportunity to learn teaching skills:

> *.....after two years attending classes, they let the students teach in the class once a week. That one day, two or three of the girls would run the class together and the Sir just watched. They cut the Sir's money for that day and put it in an account for the group.*
>
> *Fieldnotes: 15/2/96, Sanagow (HIL)*

Sharda was however adamant that she had lost out a lot by not going to school. She had started to work in the HIL clinic as a volunteer but dropped out because she did not have enough English to read the medicine names. She added that : "*you get a certificate from school". I said you also get a certificate from the adult class. Yes, said Sharda, but only the school certificate is any good for getting a job. The adult class certificate has no use for work, it's only for yourself. (ibid.)*

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[41] I did this indirectly through discussion of maps which the women drew during classes : they represented through pieces of corn the number of women who had been to school and passed the SLC in each house (see section on PRA in Chapter 2).

[42] This discussion with Sharda was facilitated by drawing a timeline where she identified key events in her life.

Women as health workers: the HIL approach to WID

This discussion about how literacy, gender and employment were viewed by facilitators and participants gives an insight into a dominant development ideology in the area. Though it is not articulated in the same way as Save's, the discourse within which HIL worked had a strong association between 'development' and 'jobs'. The job of literacy facilitator had now become a female rather than a male area of work. A man in Sanagow who works as a tempo (small taxi) driver, complained to me that whereas he used to work as a literacy facilitator, nowadays all the agencies prefer women. As regards the literacy participants, rather than running follow-up activities for women attending classes, the HIL staff tended to assume that literacy would either lead to jobs within HIL as an organisation or to jobs outside their programme, such as shop work where enhanced literacy skills might help. When requested by class participants to run sewing or knitting training programmes, the staff refused, saying that such training would not lead to jobs and that the girls only wanted skills training for their own use at home. *"Rajendra sighed and said that was just the fashion - if you run a class for women, you should give a sewing training afterwards. Women should do sewing or knitting classes, he said - that's a fashion only..." (Fieldnotes: 6/2/96, HIL Thecho).* The only follow-up programme that was considered was a further literacy "bridging" course to enable the younger girls to join the local school afterwards (and presumably gain a 'certificate'): this was an option that I heard promoted by HIL staff, but many of the girls I spoke to felt differently. *"I didn't go (to school) when I was small, how can I go now I am big?" [Fieldnotes (interview with teenage HIL class participant), 18/12/96, Sanagow].*

HIL's main emphasis as a health organisation is to run small clinics and medicine shops in the villages around Lalitpur where the literacy classes (considered to be vehicles for health education messages) are running. Several of the facilitators (all female and educated to SLC level) worked as volunteers in the health centres, going every day to receive training from the male Health Assistant and a doctor who visited once a week. The Changanathali facilitators were particularly keen on this side of their work and Anita in particular was regarded as "doctor" in her village, being called out for emergencies and even giving contraceptive injections. The female volunteers (unlike the HIL health assistants) received no payment for their work but enjoyed the status of the job, the training opportunities and the enhanced mobility. Anita often went to Kathmandu to HIL's Model Hospital (to fetch medicines or receive training), unlike the other girls of her age in the village who were expected to do the agricultural and domestic work at home[43]. Anita explained to me that her work in development started when she attended a training programme at Space's office in Kathmandu three years ago:

[43] I explored these differences through use of the PRA visual activity, mobility mapping.

It was a development training (five days) and she said that after that, she "knew Keshab Gautam [Space director], knew everybody. In fact that's when I began to know the world"

Fieldnotes: 30/10/95, Changanathali, HIL

Anita seemed to enjoy the chance to participate in a wider development community and to make contacts. She associated development not just with a job, but with becoming part of a network of new people (some of whom she was previously afraid to speak to, like the doctors). In the Save meeting described earlier, Pabitra talked about development in similar terms - about being confident enough to talk to the Save boss. However, this was not an idea that Save would promote as an objective (in fact, the staff kept a distance between themselves and the villagers through code-switching into English). In HIL by contrast, I was aware that the relationships being formed between staff and participants were an important part of the development message. Nagina, who had run the literacy programme for over ten years, showed me her photo albums. She had an individual passport photo of every past participant and remembered all their names. For her, they were not just 'participants' but they were part of the development family to which she belongs. This sense of being a family member extended to me as researcher: I would be addressed as didi (sister), rather than the more formal "Anna Madam" used by some local Save staff. The social side is not unconnected to the idea of development as a way of getting a job: Thechumaya, a participant in Sanagow class, told me her husband who had studied to class 8 was still unable to get a job.

"It doesn't matter how much you study...if you don't know people, you can't get a job these days" (Fieldnotes, 12/2/96, Sanagow, HIL).

As well as learning about medicines and health education for literacy participants, the HIL facilitators also received training related to their work as volunteers in the clinic. They would sit together in the afternoons writing up case histories for practice:

"Astha was writing in an exercise book and I asked what it was - said she was writing a case history as the doctor said to do it for practice. The case history was of a woman with a sore throat and was written in a set format with name, age, address, then some words in English that I couldn't decipher and neither could they, but I gathered it meant "symptoms" and "treatment". The rest was written in Nepali"

Fieldnotes, 14/2/96, Changanathali, HIL

With a set format and a mixture of English and Nepali technical terms, these exercises were a new literacy practice which the health volunteers saw as useful for getting a paid job eventually. Unlike the Save women's group forms, the new skills required were seen as those necessary for becoming a proper health worker, rather than to fulfil the requirements of the development agency.

Within the HIL health education programme, the objective was to challenge traditional beliefs around sickness and cures, though as I show later, many of the staff and participants disputed the Western beliefs about health given in the literacy course. The overall objective of involving women in health education was based on arguments belonging to a WID efficiency policy approach. Women were seen primarily in their reproductive role as carers of children and husbands, with no distinction made between the needs of younger and older women, unmarried and married : they were all given the same label "women" for the purposes of the programme. Although the certificate given at the end of the course said "Adult Literacy for Health and Empowerment Program" (in English - possibly for status), the meaning of "empowerment" was interpreted within HIL's development ideology, where it was assumed that more knowledgeable women could ensure the health of their families. At a picnic marking the end of the course, one of the doctors articulated this viewpoint to the participants:

> *"We are not saying that you should beat your husbands now that you are educated, but that you can teach your husbands that if they drink alcohol, their health will suffer.."*
>
> *Fieldnotes: 13/2/96, Thankot, HIL*

The doctor was referring to a reading passage entitled "Alcohol" where a husband was locked out by his wife for coming home drunk. Although the reading passage could be interpreted as encouraging women to be 'empowered' in a more political sense, the doctor tried to ensure that the main message was still a health one. Later I show how such development ideologies were disputed by both staff and participants.

Rajendra, who led the HIL literacy programme, was often telling me that he felt the course should concentrate more on "women's issues", since this was a gap in the literacy curricula currently available. I guessed that he may have intended this topic to be like the "Alcohol" lesson : a women's issue that is also a health issue. I was struck continually by the fact that the HIL literacy staff did not follow the kind of Western gender and development ideologies that Save promoted. Nagina often told me how she and her sisters had encouraged her father to take a second wife as her mother had had no sons, and how happy they all are now that the second wife had produced a boy. I gathered that the main reason why Nagina was allowed to work and lead an independent life was because she was slightly disabled, so had not had an arranged marriage. Within the organisation, though Nagina effectively ran the programme, she did not take major decisions without Rajendra's approval. Her dedication to the

literacy programme was very apparent and due to a desire to improve women's lives : however she did not see this as necessarily involving great changes within the family structure or gender division of labour.

HIL's development ideology cannot therefore be summed up as easily as Save's. The organisational philosophy apparent in Save's women's group activities (encouraging women to fill in forms and run meetings in a set way) was not present even in HIL's own office administrative structures. HIL literacy group was very flexible about their own reporting procedures and did not have rigid "rules" like Save, except regarding payment of salaries and provision of equipment. When I arrived at Save Arughat, I was given a copy of the handbook (in Nepali) distributed to facilitators which listed all the rules about literacy classes. By contrast, at HIL I had to find out about the payment procedures etc. through conversations with facilitators and trainers. Even the length of the HIL literacy course was flexible : the classes went on until the women felt they had had enough or, as when I was observing, the money suddenly stopped. The dominant development discourse in HIL is that development can lead to jobs through both education and enhanced social networks. The health and gender ideology promoted was that women could become informal health workers (i.e. by extending their reproductive roles as carers), but without changing their traditional roles within the society or family.

The development messages underlying HIL's programme as a whole (including the very absence of activities like women's skill development) do not have Western origins like Save's ideology (the emphasis on development planning and administration) but derive from the local experiences of 'development' like tourism in the immediate area. Thus though both programmes are shaped by certain ideologies of development, the way in which staff and participants position themselves in relation to these discourses is very different in HIL and Save. How people respond to the ideologies is in part related to **how** the ideas are transmitted, as I discussed earlier in relation to development ideologies within the literacy course. Looking at the ways and mediums through which the development ideologies were transmitted outside the literacy classes, the following section discusses how the various actors positioned themselves and their own ideologies in relation to these discourses.

How the message is put across : comparing approaches to training

The ideologies underlying Save's and HIL's programmes had different origins which affected both how staff received and transmitted the development messages. The development discourse within Save reflected international WID ideologies and staff were very aware that their ideas came from outside Nepal. There was a strong policy and training model whereby central staff went for training abroad, came back and trained other central staff who then went into the field and trained district office staff. The district officers held training for grassroots fieldworkers, like the literacy facilitators and group leaders. Thus through the organisational hierarchy, staff were made aware of their role in the transmission of new ideologies. The following extract from the gender training programme in Kathmandu mentioned in Chapter 4, clearly illustrates the ideology behind the training process. Sarita had just returned from an intensive gender training course abroad:

> *Sarita got up and said she was now going to show a card story. She had various cards with symbols in blue, red and green. The blue squares represented people who had not received gender training, the green squares people who had been a little sensitised after training and red circles people who were fully sensitised. The story was about a group of people who received gender training but had not all become red circles. The red circle person went out and started to sensitise others and made them red circles too. However some of the green squares also went out into the community but they were not fully sensitised, so the people they trained did not all become sensitised : some remained blue squares saying we do not want this programme, others became green squares and a few became red circles. Three reds ran away but one stayed and got attacked. The other reds became green squares again and everyone began to lose their gender sensitivity. Sarita said the message of the story was that we should internalise this training and become red circles. Prasad said it showed gender can be dangerous.*
>
> *Fieldnotes: 22/3/96, Kathmandu*

Sarita's story puts the emphasis on the mode of transmission : she was speaking at the end of a two day programme when the other staff were supposed to have become "red circles" and go out to the districts to start training the other staff. The gender ideology is presented as a package which staff either take or reject (the story conveys the idea of people being *converted,* similar to a religious context). The gender message is so strong that there is not even the possibility that it could be disputed : if people do not become red circles, this is simply because they have not been sufficiently "sensitised", or exposed to the ideology. Save's field level training programmes also followed this model of giving a message explicitly through stories. For example, this story told by a Save Finance Officer at a women's group training :

I went to Apric to see what the place is like. It was evening time by the time I got there and lots of boys were playing volleyball. I asked them about the mobile clinic that was starting there and whether they thought people would volunteer to help. The school teacher said that the boys here are all right because the women stopped them all playing cards and drinking alcohol. So that's why they were playing volleyball instead...If you do this, our children will benefit and grow up in the right way..

Fieldnotes: 10/1/96, Arughat (Save)

Even in apparently technical areas, like this training programme for women's group leaders on how to fill in forms and keep minutes, time was spent on telling moral stories - about the evils of playing cards and the importance of written evidence ("writing in the register is like a mirror as everyone can see themselves in it and everything will be clear"[44]) - as well as on learning and practising the literacy and numeracy skills required. Much of the training involved staff displaying forms and explaining them orally. As in the Karshe women's group meeting discussed earlier, development terminology on the forms had to be explained:

She [the trainer] reaches for the last form and says that kreaclab *(activity) means what you do.* Samadayik *(community) means work for others and you get no money for it. Children's development - reading in the evenings. The last box means, if you took a loan, what did you use it for?*

Fieldnotes: 10/1/96, Arughat (Save)

The forms were so complicated that when it came to practising filling them in, the 'illiterate' women (i.e. those who were only adult class educated) were expected to sit with a school-educated woman who could do it for them. When I tried to help one of the adult class students to write on the forms herself, the trainer said to me: "what to do? She is illiterate and her friend didn't come" (the group member who can write). Looking through the files of completed forms (sent to Save office from women's groups in the area over the past year), it was apparent that the development messages put across in the training programmes influenced how women filled in the forms. For example, under the 'problems' section, many would write about alcohol:

"Problem: however much we sisters tell men not to play cards and drink roksi *[spirits], they will not stop this problem. Suggestion: we*

[44] The Save Arughat office head's opening speech to the trainees.

have told the men so many times not to drink roksi and giard [local beer], not to make it at home or buy it, but to do work in the house or fields instead.."

21/2/96, Arughat, Save

The 'suggestions' section reflected women's knowledge of Save's WID agenda: most groups would request sewing and cutting training rather than other development activities.

The main way of putting across Save's development messages was thus through informal and formal training. Women saw the training programme as a one-off event and were aware of the Save conventions, such as "norm setting" (discussing together rules about when to start and finish the day, when to talk and eat during the training) and formally introducing themselves. These oral practices, like the stories about alcohol above and development terminologies, were associated with development, as well as the new literacy practices like form filling and official letter writing (one woman commented to the trainer here, "we know how to write to our mother, father, brother, sister, but not how to write to the office"). The formal structure of the course, which was described as anusarshan (discipline), also transmitted values which the women associated with development. This is not to say that they accepted these values. In fact, they enjoyed pointing out the times when the new practices did not work: the letters informing women of the starting date of this training had not reached many villages on time (whereas the news might have gone more efficiently by word of mouth). I also picked up on the underlying discourse - that development is associated with money, as the women discussed in tea breaks how much they got paid for attending various agencies' training programmes.

HIL's training courses contrasted with Save's in their comparatively informal structure: there was less advance planning and issues were dealt with in a spontaneous way, as they arose. The weekly Saturday training programmes for facilitators were described by the trainees as "meetings". Although the trainers would demonstrate how to teach the new lesson part, often followed by micro teaching, the morning was regarded primarily as a social occasion, to chat, have tea and receive any money due. There were no rules to follow, as in Save's training courses, and people would wander in and out at various times (sometimes outsiders would come in to watch too). In all HIL's training programmes, there was an unsaid agreement however that people had come to learn techniques and I never heard any development parables. Even the health sessions did not bring out the underlying ideological aspects of Western medicine being superior to traditional ayurvedic systems, but concentrated on the academic side of understanding and memorising symptoms and cures. One week when the topic Pregnancy came up, the girls facilitating classes asked whether the health assistant could teach in their place:

Nagina laughed and said he couldn't possibly go to 13 classes. ..It's not as hard as Pneumonia. You all know about feeling sick and taking iron.

4/11/95, HIL Tikkathali

Nagina treats the session as an academic exercise - considering the knowledge required, rather than the social aspects of the unmarried young facilitators being embarrassed to teach older women in their classes. When the doctor gives a training session the following week, she follows a similar model of treating the health information as a value-free technical area, in contrast to Save's more explicit objective of changing attitudes (the red circle story). The doctor dismisses the question of **how** to get across the new ideas to villagers, concentrating on the content of the message only:

Sharda: Do you have to sterilise the blade? (the doctor has just explained how to cut the umbilical cord after birth)

Doctor: Yes

Nirmala: But it's not a habit to sterilise things in the village

Doctor: You have to make it a new habit then

Fieldnotes: 10/11/95, HIL, Tikkathali

The contrasting approaches to training in HIL and Save could be seen in relation to the ideological and autonomous models of literacy. In HIL, the health ideology is presented as a neutral technology whereas in Save, the development literacy practices and gender ideology were conveyed as new values, illustrated by stories to convince people of their importance. The Save staff see their job as converting villagers to a new ideology (in both literacy and gender areas), whereas HIL staff considered themselves primarily as sources of new technical information (whether in health or literacy). HIL staff, by following the autonomous model of presenting health information as value-free, were also "ideological", in the sense that they were promoting Western medicine as a neutral technology. How the staff saw their roles influenced the way that development ideologies were transmitted in HIL and Save and how far the hidden curriculum reinforced ideas being expressed more explicitly through the training sessions.

Participating in development: local versus NGO ideologies

The "interface" between different development discourses is what concerns me most in this chapter and in the study as a whole. From looking at how staff positioned themselves in relation to the dominant discourses, I focus now on the participants' reactions to the messages they received. Understanding the participants' perspective on development, how and when they respond to agency ideologies, is an essential step towards planning and implementing more effective literacy programmes. Rather than regarding *drop-out* as a sign of weakness on the side of participants or the development planners, a consideration of the 'interface' can, for example, lead us to consider what *dropping out* means as a response to a particular discourse of development. Like Villareal's discussion of finding "no strong visible manifestations of power... but small flashes of command" (ibid.: 252), the 'interface' I describe is based on small instances where I noticed that individuals were engaging with and often disputing the dominant development discourse, such as the following story.

Phulmaya Majhi was regarded by both staff and other participants as the most persistent drop-out and irregular attender of both the Save adult class and women's group in Arutar. In fact the only time I saw her present was when the other women had told her she could not longer take loans from their group fund if she failed to turn up at the literacy class. Besides being seen as a poor student, Phulmaya was regarded by the whole of Arutar as a "loose woman". All the Majhis (the poorest caste in the village) did labouring and building work down in Arughat bazaar (half an hour away) but only Phulmaya left her four children with her husband to go for days and nights portering goods to the roadhead. This was considered a man's job as it was unsuitable for a woman to walk so far alone. Phulmaya had even travelled as far as Kathmandu when the Newar family for whom she worked in Arughat took her to assist at their son's marriage.

When I went to visit Phulmaya in her home to discuss her experience of the class, she told me very directly : "I have already been to Kathmandu three times so I don't need an adult class" (13/4/96, Arutar). She seemed to have picked up on Save's development discourse associating literacy with self-advancement, confidence, enhanced mobility, and could challenge it through her own experience: she had been able to see Kathmandu with no education at all. Although she had never attended the class without great persuasion (from fellow students and the facilitator who thought the class would be closed if there were not enough women), Phulmaya however never openly voiced her opinions until after a major altercation with Save staff.

As the numbers had fallen dramatically in the Arutar class (mainly due to Majhis being unable to go out at night after a death in their family), the facilitator called the Save staff up to the village to hold a "motivation" meeting with participants. The meeting was held in the early morning outside another Majhi participant's house and consisted largely of the staff reprimanding the women for not attending the class regularly:

Alina (facilitator): Last time we had a meeting they came for two days, then not again - what to do (sighs)

Tika (Save Education Assistant): Look how difficult they find it to write their names

Soba (member of literacy class management committee): Yes, they've studied for two years and they can't write their names

Ramesh (Save motivator): say what disadvantages you feel from being in the group

Tika: If you are ill, we don't tell you to go

Chinimaya (participant): It's only Misra, Phulmaya and Sansara who don't go

Ramesh : It's for yourself, not us - you should want it

Alina tells that yesterday she went to call Phulmaya from her house and asked where her book was. She said she had lost it and it was torn up. Then she said she wouldn't go to the class, but would come to the meeting today. She had only got back from Kathmandu yesterday.

Fieldnotes: 29/2/96, Arutar

While this conversation was going on, the other Majhi group members were busy trying to fill in the records of their group saving accounts : though they knew exactly how much they had, they had not kept written records. Phulmaya said nothing when she was criticised but later tried to get up and go back to her house, saying she had to cook the food as she was to go to work (building a house) at nine. The others called her back and said that she had not paid back her loans from the group fund. Then Ramesh said :

Ramesh: In the beginning it was Phulmaya and Soba who wanted the adult class. Now Soba has gone (to get married) and Phulmaya never comes to the class

Alina: Now say, "I won't come. I don't need the group"

Phulmaya: It's for ourselves

Ramesh: We are not asking you to come in the harvest season

When Phulmaya was challenged directly by Alina to reject the group philosophy, she tried to respond with the phrase that Ramesh used earlier ("it's for yourselves"), to adopt the development discourse. However when her attempt was not taken seriously, she got more and more frustrated and ended up beating her small daughter and the baby on the head with a large stick because they asked for food. Ramesh tried to stop her and ran after her as she left the meeting.

> *Ramesh comes back from Phulmaya's house and says... : How can we have this sort of person in the group?*
>
> *Alina: It's probably because she was angry with us here that she hit them [as the staff had asked for the loan back].*
>
> *Tika: No love. Why does she have children?*
>
> *Ramesh calls Phulmaya back : If you beat your daughter like that in a meeting, what do you do in your own home?*
>
> *Sarimaya : We all feel like crying when we see that*
>
> *Phulmaya: If I can't beat my own daughter, who can?*
>
> *Ramesh : In all the meetings I've been to, I've never seen beating like this*
>
> *Misra : Beating on the head is bad. She did it in our meeting before too.*
>
> *Phulmaya: What's the difference in a group? She is still my daughter - I can beat her if I want*
>
> *Ramesh (to me) : How can we keep her in the group?*

This dramatic turn of events made the literacy participants take sides against Phulmaya, as the Majhi who had dared to reject the development ideology. The Save staff were shocked not just because she beat her children but because this contradicted their idea of 'discipline' in meetings (hence Ramesh says "in all the meetings I've been to, I've never seen beating like this"). The group ideology, which Ramesh tries to use as the ultimate sanction (to throw her out), is challenged by Phulmaya as she shouts "What's the difference in a group?" The meeting ended with Phulmaya going off defiantly to her building work in Arughat while Ramesh dictated to Alina (for the group meeting minutes) that "we took Phulmaya out of the group". He then made a written account of the money she owed (the written accounts in their register do not amount to the same as their oral account) which the other Majhis were to present to Phulmaya. When they objected that it would be difficult to get the money now she had left the group, he advised them to take her goat by force if necessary.

Phulmaya's story illustrates how the silent drop-out, usually seen as 'failing' or 'lacking in motivation', was provoked to challenge the development discourse of group solidarity and the need for education. Phulmaya's defiance partly resulted from her inability to echo the developers' words and play the expected role of 'participant'. Her main reason for wanting to be part of the Save group (and literacy class) was to obtain loans, though she was unable to keep up the pretence of following the Save group ideology.

Another class participant, Indira, felt she could not continue going to the class after her family were ostracised from the village for cutting down some communal forest land. She drew on the development group ideology to argue the case why she had dropped out. I had gone with the class facilitator to discuss whether she wanted to continue as an adult class student:

> *Then Indira said actually she had to stay at home for the month's reading of the holy book (each evening someone reads it aloud) - she said her husband said, what's the point of you going to the class if you can stay here and read the holy book. I asked if she could read the book (called Sansthani) - says she does a little herself, but can't read the joined up letters. See, said Alina, if you hadn't come to the class you wouldn't be able to do that.... Indira then mutters something about how her husband said what is the point of you learning, the whole village has turned against us (made us alone) after the firewood incidence.... She said she felt bad to come, and that there is no point learning now that everyone is against the family. Alina said that she shouldn't feel like that, because that was a 'society' issue not that people were against them as individuals.*
>
> *Fieldnotes: 7/1/96, Arutar, Save*

Indira seems to be stressing the value of the traditional reading of the Sansthani holy book over the value of the literacy class, yet also uses the development rationale for literacy (that it is for society's good) to argue why she should not longer attend: there is no point learning now that everyone is against the family. Indira appears to accept the development rationale, but the fact that she and her family cut down the forest that the villagers were supposed to protect, suggests that she is only repeating the development rhetoric as an excuse for her non-attendance.

Phulmaya and Indira are examples of individuals' reaction to Save's ideology but there was also evidence of more generalised opposition. In my last few months in Arughat, the political situation became increasingly tense as one of the main Communist leaders was arrested and taken to jail in Gorkha. Bikram came from Arutar (see his role in forestry committee meeting, Chapter 4) and as everyone kept telling me, his only crime was to give political speeches. Groups of youths started to attack anti-Communist targets : Save offices being seen as representative of the United States. The anti-Save undercurrents that I had picked up on earlier in my stay then became more visible.

At the beginning of my stay in Arutar, I had come back to our house one day to find all the men of our street playing cards outside (ironically - in view of Save's anti-cards ideology - they were using paper given out in a Save agricultural training to keep the score!).

> *They asked me how long I would stay in Arutar and said if someone educated like me would stay for two years, they would become developed and stop playing cards..*
>
> *12/1/96, Arutar, Save*

This was the first of much probing to see where I stood in relation to Save : the cards theme becoming a symbol of NGO development ideology. Later, Bhuwan, a leading figure in local development, told me he was relieved that I didn't disapprove of playing cards because he had felt so embarrassed when I had seen him that day. He thought that I would think he was a bad man :

> *if we had chess, we would play that instead - the cards are not for gambling just for time pass*
>
> *26/2/96, Arutar*

Bhuwan became more direct in his criticism of NGOs, voicing an opposition that was shared by many in Arutar. The following extract is from a more formal interview that I held with Bhuwan about his role in village development:

> *We went back to talking about Save and I asked if he thought their objectives were different from those of himself and his neighbours. No, they are no different (now write this down well, he said). There are 60 NGOs in this district but so far we have not seen their work at all. There are 59 VDCs[45] here so if they took one VDC each, we would see their work clearly. Or if they took one sector each, we could see what they are doing. Donations are coming from individuals abroad but we never see what happens to the money because the NGOs do a little bit everywhere. They can't all work in competition..... We should be able to say we saw you doing something wrong, but we cannot say that about projects : that is the law of the project. Now Save's objective is to bring the backward forward, but they live in big*

[45] Village Development Committee, the administrative unit now used for local government development initatives which replaced the Panchayat of pre-Democracy days.

hotels, have big cars and donations are eaten by the staff. The money donated does not even reach here. They should go and see the adult class - they don't even give enough money for the adult facilitators to live on.... They should take the people that don't work properly by the ear...I said if the village felt very strongly as he did about NGOs, why don't they complain? The government does not allow us to complain. If we do then we will end up like Bikram. They will take us if we complain, they said they are coming for me next. We are all too frightened to complain here.

Fieldnotes: 26/2/96, Arutar, Save

Bhuwan's strong criticisms were shared by many of the other men in Arutar and reflected a wider politically-based opposition to foreign NGOs. His argument echoes Save's discourse "to bring the backward forward", but also that of the Communist party he supports (at that time not in power). His attack is partly based on an outsider/insider conflict where NGOs represent the outside, money coming from abroad and staff coming from Kathmandu and expecting the same good facilities in the village. Bhuwan criticised the NGOs' current way of working and their expressed philosophy (like playing cards being evil) : he saw Save as useful for "small work" like running women's groups, but the Government as the key to "real development" like improved infrastructure. He had recently been instrumental in getting the government water department to construct drinking water taps in Arutar.

Bhuwan is an active member of the four committees in Arutar which were set up to implement development projects through the government: forestry, drinking water, irrigation, school. I noticed that he did not mention the groups that Save had set up when talking to me about village development (agriculture, adult class and women's group). All the village committees he mentioned consisted only of male members, except for forestry where on pressure from the women's group, one woman had been allowed to attend. When I asked about this, he said there were three clear reasons:

- *women have to have children*
- *women have their own problems at home : their responsibility is the work of the home so they cannot come to meetings. (He laughed and said, the possessions of the home are the women's but the rights are the men's, isn't that right?)*

- *you have to travel (to Gorkha and Kathmandu) if you sit on a committee but women can't do that.*

He added later that society did not like women sitting together with men to discuss or in a group, but that habit is going a bit now, things are changing slowly.

Fieldnotes: 12/2/96, Arutar (Save)

Compared with the official Save gender ideology that I explored earlier, Bhuwan sees groups (the committees) as needing to take into account women's existing roles and constraints rather than as a mechanism of change. He sees committees as men's work within the existing sexual division of labour and though he mentions that "things are changing slowly", he does not see such change as having to be "initiated by someone else" (Shrestha, 1994: 51). His model of development thus contrasts greatly with Save's: he sees development as local people (men) working together to improve village facilities, but not to consciously change attitudes. Attitudes towards women's role may change but more as a side-effect of such physical changes, rather than a deliberate consciousness-raising strategy such as the NGOs adopt.

The above analysis of Bhuwan's view of development places a local development discourse in the context of international ideologies of development, as perceived by Bhuwan. Unlike Phulmaya's more individual attack, Bhuwan's opposition to Save's development discourse links into a wider political movement and is articulated in terms of 'them' and 'us' (the developers versus the developed, their model of development versus ours). Communism in Nepal does differ from the international context in that the emphasis is not on *class*, but on breaking down *caste* discrimination. Caste is not equivalent to class: the lowest caste are usually but not always the poorest - just as in Arutar village, the Mahjis were higher caste but poorer than the untouchable Sarkis.

At this point, it is important to make a distinction between different discourses at the local level: the ideas about women's role stated above significantly reflect Bhuwan's and other **male** views. As the forestry committee meeting (Chapter 4) showed, the women felt quite bitter about their exclusion from village development activities, saying "they don't want women here". Though the women I met did not consider that Save's women groups were an answer to their problems, they also did not completely reject the gender ideologies put across by agencies like Save. An example is the story of Laxmi, the Save USA cook.

Laxmi worked as a cook for the Save staff in the Arughat office. She had got the job after studying in a Save literacy class in Gorkha (eight hours walk away) and had learnt enough writing to be able to keep the accounts and records of meals taken. Laxmi's attitude towards Save was ambivalent: she had found a career with the organisation but she also believed this was to do with her own initiative. A discussion I had with her about a book on women's rights illustrates how she responded to ideas of change in the development discourse :

Back here, I spent a long time talking to Laxmi in our bedroom - she showed me a book called "Demystification of law for Nepali women"[46] (in Nepali) and said the didis (sisters) brought it from Save office. She said it's about men and women being equal. It's comic strips about women's rights. She opened it and read it aloud (with great expression) - a story about a woman whose husband gets a second wife and her going to a lawyer to fight it. Laxmi read each sentence then put it into simple language for my benefit (as if translating), gasping with shock at some parts (bichare! how awful!). It was quite a coincidence [reading this story together] after her telling me yesterday about her mother's problem (her father took a second wife). She got a bit confused reading the 'bubbles" in the cartoon, knowing which box followed which. She said her mother didn't fight against her father when this happened (he'd found a new wife when 'on service' in another area, then brought her back). Laxmi explained that a lot of the old traditions like marrying young girls off have changed and her sister only got married at 20. Laxmi is earning 1500 Rs in this job (plus food). She said she would like to get married but her father won't arrange it for her. I said she read very well after only 6 months in an adult class. She says her sister can read just as well after teaching herself - she asked people a different letter each day, then practised herself. She works in a shop so has to read things. She can do all the maths orally but cannot write it down. Laxmi's brother is in the army - now in Okaldhunga - he studied to class 8. The father has two more daughters ! his second marriage and they both go to school (unlike Laxmi and sister).

Fieldnotes: 14/11/95, Arughat

This account can be read in two ways : as Laxmi responding enthusiastically to the comic strips about women's equality and as her disputing the ideas (e.g. of the woman going to get a lawyer) as being unrealistic, based on her own experience. Like Bhuwan, she feels that the old traditions are changing but does not suggest that it is because of Save. In fact she rejects my praise that she can read so well after only a six months adult course, saying her sister did just as well without any class at all. She feels that she has learnt to read fluently more through her own efforts and practice than through the original course she attended. We therefore have a more complex situation than Laxmi either challenging or accepting the gender ideology in the book she reads: she obviously does identify with certain elements of the story, but also contradicts ideas about change being initiated by development projects. Learning informally through her job as a Save cook and her salary is seen by Laxmi as 'development' as well as the adult class she attended in Gorkha.

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[46] This book was not published by Save, but by a Nepali NGO running legal literacy projects.

HIL is a useful comparison with Save, since a coherent development ideology was not articulated explicitly. I discussed in relation to Save's group meetings, how though the staff lectured directly on development ideology, their actions were also influenced by their belonging to similar communities with an understanding of how gender relations are in everyday life. The local staff were thus caught between two ideologies of development : the concepts coming from Kathmandu and the States, as opposed to the local discourse of gender and caste relations with which they were more familiar. The hierarchy of ideologies evident in Save (where staff were supposed to promote the theories coming from central office) was not apparent in HIL : staff at various levels disputed and responded differently to messages coming across in the course and programme as a whole. Like their approaches to literacy teaching, their development strategy was not considered as given, but subject to debate both at an organisational and a classroom level.

The situation was complicated by the internal politics of the organisation: the group of doctors who ran HIL at central level had obtained money from foreign donors for a community health programme, but actually much funding appeared to be going to the construction of a private nursing home in Kathmandu. The literacy trainers, headed by Rajendra and Nagina, had been orought into the organisation to provide literacy classes to strengthen the health education programme. As they had been working for years in adult literacy, the Thecho trainers kept telling me they were interested in literacy not health but had had to adopt the doctors' objectives in order to gain funding. They thus officially promoted the Western model of medicine that the doctors believed in, yet their own closer relationship with the communities where the participants came from, influenced how this discourse was viewed by participants and facilitators. The different relationship of the doctors and the literacy staff to the participants came out very clearly in the speeches they made to the women at the annual picnic. The doctors viewed the women as "illiterates" and consequently gave moral stories about how literacy could improve their lives :

> *Next [a HIL doctor] spoke about how you can learn at any age: small children learn in one way, adults in another. He said, I have studied more than you but I still want to study. Even though I am a doctor, I still need to do social work and to learn more. He told the women to do a sum every day, read one page or else you will forget. I know you are 'busy' (using English word) but do study at least one hour a day, even if you have to give up some other work to do this. He then went on to ask, why do we need health? What is it? The Sister spoke next ... She said, big sisters, small sisters, you must understand that this programme is for ourselves, for our 'empowerment' [using English word]. That means for yourself. You have to think about the future, where you will be - not in your parents' house and it is not enough to write a few letters, do housework. She told a story about how a husband tricks his wife - he asks her to sign a letter. She asks what it is about and he says*

that it is a letter to get a loan to buy a buffalo but actually it is a letter saying he can leave her and get a second wife.

Fieldnotes: 13/2/96, Thankot

I heard this kind of story about illiterates being tricked and the advice about how they should study hard in Save classes, but never from the HIL facilitators. When the HIL literacy staff got up to give speeches at this picnic, they all gave very factual accounts of the course and did not make any attempt to 'improve' the women. Their attitude towards the participants was that the women came to literacy classes for their own varied reasons, and if they dropped out, there was no attempt to 'motivate' them in the way that Save staff did. The HIL staff did not see their task as to convert women to a literacy/development ideology, merely to run the classes. As a result, I did not observe any instances of staff or participants challenging the dominant development discourse outside the classroom (as in my analysis of Save), since it was only within the class that development ideas were 'taught'. The local ideology of development being associated with jobs and self-advancement was generally accepted outside the classroom by both staff and participants. I will therefore look now to the HIL literacy classes to analyse how the Western health discourse was received.

The women in the classes were aware of the development ideology behind the lessons but, particularly the older women, enjoyed disputing the new health messages:

Nagina was explaining that a certain type of worm was on sag (spinach) and that if you eat it raw, you get infected. The women laughed "Oh, I ate that raw today - what can you do if you're in the fields all day cutting paddy and you see some nice sag growing. No time to cook it - just eat it and get worms". Nagina asked if she knew how big the worms are - the woman showed her with a stick. Then Nagina talked about hook worms and said you catch this worm if you go to the toilet with no shoes on. The woman laughed and joked, "We don't have to worry about that one - we don't have any toilets to go to anyway! We just go in the khola (stream), anywhere when we get the urge". The group of older women cackled away and then the joker turned her attention to me: "What can I do - eat or study? How can I cut paddy, dry it all day and then come to study? My arms are aching, I'm tired out.."

Fieldnotes: 30/10/95, Changanathali (HIL)

The woman here plays on the stereotyped image of herself as a villager in the development stories: she eats whatever she can when she is hungry, goes to the toilet wherever she has the urge. She challenges the kind of health messages that the HIL staff are putting across by also emphasising the difficulties of studying after a hard day's work (this class was held during the

harvest period when the women were so exhausted they were literally falling asleep). Nagina, who is an experienced trainer, enjoyed this kind of banter with the women, but the young facilitators were at a loss how to handle the comments and as a result usually conducted the reading passages as technical chanting of the letters rather than discussion of health issues. The following extract from another lesson, shows how Nirmala, the facilitator, reacted to the women joking about development messages:

> *Suddenly the electric light went off and we were plunged into darkness. I found my torch and Nirmala located some candles and lit them. Rita dug into her blouse and produced a cigarette and promptly lit it in the flame. They all started laughing and Indira said, this is the sort of woman you get studying at adult literacy classes. Rita retorted that it said you shouldn't drink alcohol, it didn't mention cigarettes...who was it, she said, Ram Kumari who had problems with roksi (alcohol) - referring to one of the literacy stories. Nirmala wrote saruwa rog (communicable disease) on the board and asked them to write it five times in their copy books. Rita put her cigarette away and started to write laboriously.*
>
> *Fieldnotes: 9/11/95, Tikkathali (HIL)*

The women see through the literacy primer as a vehicle of development messages and enjoy joking about themselves as the targets of such messages. As Nirmala's response shows, they are however very interested in the reading and writing side of the lesson. Nirmala never tried to push the development messages, especially as the class consisted of her own mother, aunt and friends. The level of the women's attack on the development ideology was very sophisticated compared to Save's classes, perhaps because they were more determined just to take the literacy side of the course and had less to gain from HIL's health programme (few women attended the HIL daily clinics in this area). In Arughat by contrast, the Save literacy class participants felt that they should go along with the development ideologies if they were to get any material advantages (as Phulmaya's case showed). The fact that HIL did not follow such a clearly Western development discourse as might be expected, could also be linked to their political objective, as ensuring support for the Nepal Communist party. By recognising and responding to local discourses, such as the association of development with jobs, HIL also strengthened their political position locally.

The 'interface' between local and international development discourses can thus been seen through instances like those described above, when individuals challenged the dominant ideology, whether gender or health. Ethnographic research like this can help to explore whose development is being met through literacy programmes by analysing how and when people challenge the development messages they receive.

Concluding remarks

I am aware that this account has been written from the perspective of a 'developer' and could be seen to contain a one-sided view of development ideologies. After describing the dominant development discourses in HIL and Save, I then pointed to examples of local people disputing or challenging these ideologies. In other words, I looked at how local discourses fitted into development, rather than beginning with an analysis of the local ideologies. To conclude therefore, I will look at an instance when my own role as a 'developer' was challenged through exposure to local ideologies of gender.

The Newari community where I lived in Arutar performed many rituals marking girls' transition into womanhood. I was surprised that even the Westernised, Kathmandu-educated families would perform these ceremonies, which to me as a Westerner, seemed cruel to the girls. While I was staying in the village, the school headmaster who lived next-door decided to put his daughter "in the corner". This ritual should be performed some time before the girl starts menstruating for the first time: she is kept in a dark room for twelve days and not allowed to see the sun or a man's face. The following extract from my fieldnotes describes my visit to the girl "in the corner".

On the way back from the class we went into Kamal's house where his daughter is "in the corner". All the older women were sitting outside her room making leaf plates for the feast at the end of the twelve days. From inside the room we could hear all the young girls singing and dancing to the drum. Laxmi and I went inside - it was stiflingly hot and smelly as filled with girls, but also the windows have not been opened for six days. The girl who is "in the corner" looked really happy, playing the drum very energetically. I had thought they would be in the dark, but they can keep the electric light on. Dev Maya said when she did this ritual, they only had tiny oil lamps so it was much harder, but they did it as a group of eight girls together so it was more fun. There was a doll like a skeleton made from white cotton hanging on the wall and all the windows were sealed so that no sun could get in. The girl has to pee in a pot in the daytime, but can go out at night to the toilet as there is no sun. Every time the door would open to let someone in or out, everyone would shut it quickly so that the girl would not catch a glimpse of a man outside. Dev Maya said even the young boys ... can't come near the room.

There were mostly young girls of about twelve, but also mothers like Dev Maya and Urmila and a very old woman who sat on the bed and shouted to them to sing more. There were about twenty women altogether, all singing with such energy and after a while I began to catch the words - they had made up verses about how boys and girls are born from the same place so should be equal; that girls can also

study now to IA[47] BA. I was so surprised as it seems the women have turned this ritual to their advantage and it has become a time to strengthen their solidarity. Outside a few men (including father from our house) sat and at one point they asked for the drum so they could accompany the singing from outside the door. Sanju and some other girls had fallen asleep on the bed (it was about 11 p.m.). Urmila started dancing and Dev Maya (one at a time as is the custom here) and the older women seemed to take over the singing. Eventually at about 12, some women went out to go to bed and I left too, but many were still there singing. Apparently they go on singing all night sometimes and even from the early morning you can hear the drum. Dev Maya says she is planning to put ... [her daughters] in the corner together so it will be nicer for them.

Fieldnotes: 27/2/96, Arutar

As comes across in this account, all my stereotyped ideas about coming-of-age rituals were challenged by the experience of watching the singing and dancing in the house next-door. Rather than being an oppressive custom for women, the ritual had become an unusual opportunity for women to come together without men present and sing about their hopes. This ritual appeared to be a more "empowering" situation for women than all the women's development initiatives I have observed. I will end this chapter with this event since it brings into focus the question of how development fits into such local understandings of gender. The issue is not so much how participants or communities respond to development programmes initiated in their areas but whether literacy and development ideologies, such as I have described in this chapter, can respond to changes that are already taking place.

This chapter has looked at the kind of development that people living in Arughat and Lalitpur envisaged as compared to the literacy planners' objectives. Detailed ethnographic data can thus provide a way into understanding the interaction between local and international discourses of development. I suggested a way of analysing the different processes involved, by looking at the 'dominant' development discourses which shape the programme as a whole, how the NGOs' ideology is transmitted directly or indirectly through training programmes and new literacy practices. Going on to consider local ideologies influencing the programmes, I analysed the way that participants positioned themselves in relation to the NGOs' development ideologies. My exploration has shown that *local* cannot be generalised as one dominant Nepali ideology of bikas (as Pigg suggests), but needs to be seen from varying perspectives of caste, gender and geographical differences. The "interface" between local and dominant development ideologies like WID, is influenced by many factors such as the NGO's political position, the background of NGO staff and the kind of development already taking place locally (seen in traditional institutions and degree of urbanisation). My purpose in analysing this "interface" was not simply

[47] Intermediate Arts certificate, the equivalent of 'A' levels

as Hobart suggests (1993: 16) to demonstrate the "strain" on locals participating in development, but to point to ways in which detailed ethnographic research could help to ease such tension - for example, by using ethnographic accounts in agency field reports. The concluding chapter looks more specifically at the implications that these findings have for literacy planners, suggesting how the mechanical planning model associated with the dominant development discourse (Long, 1992) could be replaced with a more flexible approach to literacy programming.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Parents attend an annual meeting at Arutar school to discuss reports prepared by the school committee, including plans and budgets for the coming year. About ten women were also present, but they left before the main business to prepare te evening meal

CHAPTER SEVEN

WOMEN'S LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT: LINKING RESEARCH AND PLANNING

Introduction

At the beginning of this book, I suggested that my aim was to expand the debate around *does literacy bring development?* into a consideration of *what kind of literacy brings what kind of development to whom?* This question has been analysed in terms of the literacy practices that women participants and facilitators engaged in (within classrooms and outside) and how they positioned themselves in relation to certain development ideologies to which these practices belonged. Literacy practices like LGM were transformed from their Western origins due to factors outside the literacy classroom, such as the facilitators' educational background or local concepts about education. Participants of literacy classes, as well as planners and researchers, were found to have their own theories of literacy and development which influence what happens to projects in practice.

The findings presented so far in this study, such as examples of how literacy teaching methods in practice differ from the ideal, could be interpreted in a planning context as 'failures in implementation' or even as a rejection of 'planning' for development. The divergences described between policy and practice are however more a critique of dominant planning methodologies than of the specific development projects or staff that I describe. My findings thus have implications not just for research methodology, but for the way literacy interventions are planned and implemented. As well as summarising findings around the links between literacy and development, this chapter aims to set previous case study analysis in the wider context of educational planning and policy for developing countries, and the potential contribution of ethnographic research.

What kind of literacy brings what kind of development to whom?

The key differences between the "kinds of literacy" examined in this study lay in the language of instruction, literacy teaching approaches and reading materials, which I looked at in relation to 'development' (as perceived by planners and participants). Whereas Save planners saw mother

tongue and Nepali literacy teaching as helping women to participate more fully in group development activities like income generating, the women themselves were aware of a different kind of development (from which they were excluded), associated with English literacy and Save as an organisation. In HIL, planners had introduced Nepali and English teaching to Newari speakers, since they shared the women's views that Newari literacy was not linked to development or enhanced self-esteem. However the reality of the classrooms, where several languages were used at any one time, pointed to the differing needs of the women according to their age and situations. Whereas English or Nepali literacy might give confidence to a young girl working in a carpet factory where Nepali was spoken, an older Newari-speaking woman who only used Newari language in her everyday life might feel the Nepali language to be a barrier to learning in the literacy class. Thus Nepali literacy brought self-esteem to the younger girls, whereas the older women considered even learning to speak (rather than to write) Nepali a great step forward. In both cases, the link between development and the language of literacy instruction was more around women's enhanced confidence and sense of self-esteem, rather than specific functional uses, such as learning to read English room numbers in a hotel.

As regards literacy approaches, the planners of Save and HIL used both the terms "Freirean" and "functional" to describe their literacy materials, assuming that a particular literacy approach would lead to a certain development outcome, e.g. Freirean literacy leading to empowerment or functional literacy leading to health awareness. My observations in the classrooms suggested however that in practice, literacy teaching was more affected by social factors, such as relationships between facilitator and class or by participants' views on education, than by such planned curriculum changes. Many participants (particularly older women) disputed the development messages in the course, partly in response to the strongly didactic style of the reading passages. When they disagreed with the messages - for example, the need to build latrines - they reacted by putting pressure on the facilitator to chant reading passages mechanically (mirroring traditional school education) rather than having a discussion. Not all new kinds of literacy were rejected : LGM in several cases had enabled women to have a new voice and, particularly in Save, had facilitated more creative discussion of social issues. However, I also observed LGM being transformed in practice to become an examining technique and seen as linked with 'development' more because of the Western theoretical origin (and English label) than the functional skills or awareness gained. All the women at classes valued most the ability to sign their names, particularly in public arenas, where they felt they had gained a new identity as a literate person. Within all the classrooms, this kind of intangible self-development was associated with literacy, rather than the information or skills to participate in specific development activities, as envisaged by the planners.

What kind of development took place was determined not just by the literacy activities in the classrooms, but by how people saw 'literacy' in relation to their everyday lives and what they envisaged as 'development'. HIL participants saw development in terms of the commercial sector and well-paid jobs: staff supported this view, feeling that real change came from outside their programme (e.g. political movements). Women wanted access to the same kind of

education as boys had in schools; Nepali and English literacy for status/confidence, rather than specific literacy skills for certain NGO development activities. Save participants also made a distinction between 'real' development (political change, jobs) and the kind of development offered by NGOs like Save. However the staff actively promoted the latter, feeling their job was to convert local people to Save's vision of development (as expressed in the literacy course books) and provide the necessary skills and ideology (new literacy practices like form filling, report writing and knowledge of development terms).

How far the NGOs chose to create and make more explicit links between women's literacy and development, influenced the kind and quality of literacy learning taking place and whether the programme could support the women's own visions of development. In looking at how development and women's literacy were linked in the HIL and Save programmes studied, I found that in both agencies, the literacy course was intended to transmit new development messages as well as to provide literacy and numeracy skills. Save staff chose not to respond to local ideologies by building on existing literacy practices, but instead to teach new literacy practices associated with development. Most women participants accepted that if they wanted to improve their literacy skills, they would have to listen to these ideas and adopt new practices, such as attending women's meetings. By contrast, in HIL, participants and facilitators openly disputed development messages in the course and felt free to adjust the classes to the kind of education which they wanted. In both HIL and Save, the literacy classes became more traditionally focused on the 3 Rs like the local schools, though there was less acknowledgement of this by the Save staff.

The women who continued to attend literacy classes generally felt they had become more educated, regardless of the kind of literacy approach adopted, and usually this was symbolised by being able to sign their name, no longer being a "thumb print person" (Robinson-Pant, 1998). Younger women often gained more because they found it easier to study in the formal set-up of a classroom, they were closer in age to the facilitator and they had a stronger sense of being excluded from the education and development opportunities offered to their brothers. The findings of this study suggest above all the limitations of centrally-designed literacy programmes : whereas LGM provided an opportunity for some individuals to write about their lives and develop a voice in the local community, other women found this new Western practice irrelevant and felt that learning to read religious books would enhance their exisiting roles. This chapter will look more closely at the implications of this research for planners: how can we ensure that a literacy programme initiates the kind of development that specific groups or individual women want?

Linking research and planning : finding a new model

Throughout this book, I have aimed to explore how ethnographic research might lead to greater understanding of the interaction between local and international discourses on gender, literacy and development. Looking at how women participants "took hold" of literacy (Kulick and Stroud, ibid.), I suggested ways of researching the "interface" (Villareal, ibid.) between participants and planners. In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, specific findings from my detailed ethnographic accounts (such as code-switching within classrooms) were presented that might be relevant to programme planners. Although I thereby implied that ethnographic research such as mine could be used within a planning context to reflect women's views on literacy programmes, I have not so far discussed **how** research and planning are linked. An idea that arose earlier - of the tension between research and planning of women's literacy programmes - points to the need to consider exactly how and when research can influence planning methodologies.

In the previous chapter, I looked not just at development brought by literacy programmes, but at the kind of literacy brought by development programmes. The link between women's literacy and development was seen by participants not simply as the educational messages given in the literacy primers, but as the new practices associated with development, such as keeping minutes of meetings. Similarly, the practices associated with development planning as a discourse influence how and when ethnographic research can be used within programme planning. Whilst working in Arughat, I became aware that the Save staff shared common assumptions about planning which influenced both how they wrote funding proposals and annual plans, as well as how they related to communities in the field. They drew more on statistical evidence from national surveys than from their own informal knowledge gained through interaction with local people, believing that a plan or proposal should be as impersonal as possible and written in English (see example in Appendix XIII). The planning process I observed brought up several issues which are key to determining how my own study can be used in a development context. How far do planner and researcher as authors remain invisible, rather than articulating the subjectivity of their positions? How are different kinds of knowledge used in planning processes and how can ethnographic research build on the current informal knowledge that staff already have? The other key issue is around the literacy practices and texts associated with planning: how far does the dominant planning genre influence how programmes are implemented and how staff relate to "women" in the field? All these micro level debates have wider implications for the role of research and planning in development programmes.

Planning and research are often presented in a dependent static relationship: researchers rely on policy makers to set research agendas (such as the link between literacy and fertility) and to decide how to use their findings (King, 1991). However, I have suggested here that the relationship can be more dynamic : that researchers can also influence the kind of planning procedures used. For example, my ethnographic data and analysis in Chapter 4 pointed to the need to replace the current rational comprehensive approach to language planning with the transformative approach. My emphasis has not been to discover how my research can fit into

current planning procedures. Rather, I have used ethnographic data of the literacy programmes to critique the dominant development discourse, suggesting that a more flexible approach to literacy planning needs to replace the current mechanical planning models. Using an action-oriented ethnographic approach thus raises questions that may not arise in the context of more quantitative research: for example, who is involved in planning and research and why? What social practices are associated with planning and research? How are research findings used and communicated by planners? By considering planning and research practices together rather than as separate parts of an equation, I shift the emphasis onto considering what kind of planning practices lead on from and arise from an ethnographic approach to research.

Planning approaches which have been linked closely to ethnographic research (e.g. Rondinelli, Long) rather than to action research, are not concerned so much with who is the researcher and planner but with changing existing planning and administrative structures. They fail to discuss how research findings are used and presented in the planning context, a key issue within participatory planning methodologies and within my own research. By contrast, transformative and participatory planning approaches not only advocate different kinds of research (e.g. PRA's visual activities), but aim to change the relationships between researcher and researched, policy maker and planner. In gender planning and PRA, for example, the planner is seen as a political actor attempting to "transform" the attitudes of policy makers. However, within the transformative tradition which Moser identifies (gender planning, environmental planning), though the role of the planner is brought into focus, the question of **who** is involved in planning and research is not really addressed : planners and researchers are the same separate people as in earlier traditional approaches, but take on different roles (e.g. as trainers). Participatory approaches to planning however, such as PRA, have begun with the idea that local people can also become researchers and planners. The emphasis is then on how to find ways of sharing knowledge and making planning structures more accessible to disadvantaged groups. Although PRA has involved local people in research and planning, through using visual and oral methods instead of written documents, the problem of "institutionalising participation" into donor agencies remains (IDS, 1996; Holland, 1998) and PRA has faced difficulties in changing the established planning procedures in development agencies. The changes brought about through the use of participatory planning methodologies seem to be more around the kind of information gained through research than in decision making structures. The alternatives to a rational comprehensive planning approach thus all have some limitations, but used in combination could provide, for example, a participatory approach to gender planning (e.g. Guijt and Shah, 1998).

In looking at how the relationship between research and planning could be "more dynamic" (Long, ibid.), I have taken into account factors influencing this relationship, such as the social practices involved in planning and research (including literacy practices like the Save funding proposal), the roles taken by planner and researcher in literacy programmes (and who they are), and the purpose of planning and research (including the political agenda which determines how research findings are used). Considering these issues in relation to my own

research, as I realise that - like Long - I face the challenge of how to move beyond the analysis of the development "interface" and "intervention practices" to suggest **how** exactly such research can lead to more dynamic planning processes.

Linking ethnographic research to planning : what this study has shown

Adopting an ethnographic research approach has allowed me to explore literacy and development programmes as social processes rather than to evaluate outcomes: not simply evaluating the impact of programmes, but observing and analysing the practices associated with certain ideologies. I ended up looking at the wider development programmes and the communities as a whole to understand how literacy classes fitted into or challenged local beliefs about education and literacy. I was thus concerned, not to separate out *planning* from my research into literacy practices, but to explore the assumptions underlying the planning processes that I studied in relation to the case study NGOs, HIL and Save. Rather than trying to simplify the relationship between planning and research approaches by, for example, listing "constraints" to implementing LGM effectively, ethnography enabled me to explore the tension between research and planning approaches. In particular, I have moved away from the idea of planning being a technical area (that "barriers to motivation" can have solutions) to analyse the ideological dimensions of planned literacy interventions. Theoretical frameworks, such as the gender policy models or approaches to literacy planning, were not introduced in order to *explain* programmes' objectives. Rather, my objective has been to keep theoretical models, such as gender policy and literacy models, in tension to emphasise their value as planning tools.

In analysing "intervention practices" such as literacy classes or development meetings, I have shown the differing perspectives of planners, researchers and participants through their interaction. Although such interactions have been presented through my voice as narrator, an ethnographic account has allowed me to a certain extent to present contrasting perspectives almost simultaneously, rather than analysing situations solely from the providers' point of view. This analysis challenges the usual polarisation of macro versus micro policy, showing that micro-ethnographic approaches to research can have relevance for literacy policy on a macro level. By bringing together differing perspectives of planners, facilitators, researchers and participants of literacy programmes, I have also been able to explore the inter-relationship of policy, planning and implementation : facilitators also held their own theories of development and literacy which meant that *planning* did not end when implementation began. Following the 'transformative' planning approach, the concept of planning as "debate" (Moser, ibid.) is central to my analysis of how facilitators and participants interacted with the development strategy and literacy approaches being presented to them in NGOs and literacy classrooms.

A critical ethnographic approach encourages a reflexive attitude towards the researcher's role and the text produced. In the planning context, this meant that I was constantly analysing my role as researcher within an NGO and how my values affected the reports I wrote for the

agencies' planning purposes and the academic study. My research approach thus enabled me to look more critically at the kind of written documents I produced and how they were to be used within the planning processes of the NGOs concerned. From a consideration of my own role, I went on to analyse the planning discourse within which most staff members participated and how, not just the researcher, but planners and implementers of programmes could be more *reflexive* about their roles and the texts they produce. The dominant WID discourse of women as powerless victims, was the most obvious difference between the NGO reports and my own accounts, and particularly affected the kind of interventions planned for 'women's development'.

There are several significant constraints to using ethnographic research in a planning context - largely around the texts produced and the researcher's role in relation to institutions and organisations. A major dilemma that I have encountered is less around form of presentation and more around the ethics of using material drawn from micro level studies in the more public arena of project planning. Though I was open about my research aims and methods during the fieldwork period, I was unsure how to use material about individuals to make critical points about agency policy and practice. Whilst I recognise and have tried to be open about my *bias* as author of this text, I am more concerned that I have spoken for individuals who did not particularly want to speak in a planning context. Since my research was not based on formal interviews, informants could not necessarily decide which point of view to put across as I collected information informally and in a variety of settings. Although staff were aware of me observing training sessions or classes and requested my feedback, they were likely to believe (based on their experience of other colleagues' reports) that the kind of report I produced in the end would be a list of numbered points, rather than a detailed account of their interactions.

My ethical dilemmas on how to use ethnographic material in a planning context are thus partly around introducing a new research approach into agencies more used to quantitative evaluation reports. The informants' ideas about the kind of information I was collecting and how I intended to use it, were influenced by the planning and research discourse with which they were most familiar. I became more cautious about using ethnographic accounts to inform policy, after an account I had written of a women's group report writing training was taken as a criticism of the individual trainer. The report was intended to draw more critical attention to the kind of literacy practices Save was introducing to groups, but staff interpreted the account as a failure of the individual to train women in these practices. My accounts of literacy classes in Chapters 4 and 5 could be interpreted in a similar way. My own aim of problematising concepts such as "barriers to participation", through an ethnography of the projects, lay outside the staff's experience too. Even when I returned to Nepal with this finished text in 1998, informants found it difficult to relate to the academic genre.

My own role as researcher also proved more problematic through adopting an ethnographic approach, partly because it was less clear how exactly my research could contribute to planning processes. Staff were not familiar with ethnographic approaches to

research and had fixed ideas about how researchers should arrange formal meetings or "ask questions". My role was further complicated because my position within (or outside) the NGOs concerned was not clear. Unlike a consultant, I had not been called to evaluate the programmes or even to feed my results into the planning process : however I was also not entirely an outsider. As time went on, it became clear that many staff regarded my research as influencing the planning process - either as a channel for voicing fieldworkers' concerns or as a political lever for obtaining more funds. My own ambiguous relationship within the NGOs I studied - not knowing whether as researcher, I was entitled to challenge current planning procedures - made me realise that the position of an ethnographic researcher in an implementing agency could be less defined than, for instance, someone evaluating a programme using quantitative techniques. If I had been in the position of a researcher employed by the agency, rather an independent academic researcher, I would certainly have had a clearer role in terms of contributing to planning. However my own research strategy would have been constrained by agency objectives and I would have been less able to take the holistic view that I consider to be one of the main advantages of adopting an ethnographic approach.

In writing reports or accounts of field work and in talking to participants, I have found it difficult to explain not just my objectives or research strategy, but wondered "how to communicate research evidence" (Burgess, 1993: 30). As my findings are around processes rather than outcomes, about finding new ways of using theory, I face a particular difficulty in trying to share these insights with planners and participants of the programmes I studied. Street (1995:1) describes the field of literacy studies as being "in a transitional phase. The new theoretical perspectives are affecting practical programs unevenly, while the experience of on-the-ground practitioners is feeding differentially into academic research". In my own fieldwork, I tried to explain to literacy planners and trainers some of the concepts associated with the New Literacy Studies, such as *literacy practices*. I was however left feeling that these terms would be regarded and used in a similar way to how I have described "LGM" or "gender roles" being referred to in Save training programmes. Though the theoretical concepts of linguistics, literacy and education may be relevant to practitioners, I see the task of presenting them as analytical tools to people who are not familiar with academic discourse as near impossible. In this respect, ethnographic analysis is likely to remain less accessible to grassroots planners and implementers than quantitative results in a table with which they are more familiar and which they have learnt to read. Training programmes for literacy planners could try to meet this need, for example, by teaching people how to 'read' and analyse case studies as well as quantitative data.

To summarise, I found an ethnographic research approach useful for exploring planning processes within literacy programmes because I was enabled to take a holistic approach, combine perspectives of planners, implementers and participants and to develop theory through observation. I could also take a more reflexive attitude towards my role both as researcher and planner within an NGO. However, my role as ethnographic researcher was complicated since there was not such a clear division between what was research and what was not, or around what my role in planning could be. Difficulties in the actual use of ethnographic evidence within a

development institution arose, since individuals were likely to be 'blamed' due to the specificity of data and because agency staff did not share the theoretical perspective that I came from. Although I did not find it easy to use or communicate ethnographic research findings in an NGO planning context, the situation would probably have been even harder in a government programme where staff are used to more top-down administrative and planning structures.

Planning and researching women's literacy programmes: suggestions to the providers

Throughout this book, I have addressed issues around the use of an action-oriented ethnographic research approach to analyse the link between women's literacy and development. Rather than analysing the relationship between *literacy* and *development* in terms of measurable outcomes, an ethnographic methodology allowed to me explore *literacies* and *ideologies of development* within the areas where I was based in Nepal. The outcome of my research has been to describe and analyse the processes I observed, including the implications that such data and methodology has for planners and policy makers. Because of the nature of my research, my findings are as much around **how** to research women's literacy programmes as about **what** I found out about individual programmes. My conclusion will therefore centre less on specific 'findings' from my research on HIL and Save, and more on identifying when and how ethnography can influence current policy and practice. In terms of the implications this research has for NGO women's literacy programmes, the following suggestions are offered to planners and policy makers:

Approaches to literacy planning

This research in Nepal has shown that the various approaches adopted towards literacy programming (Freirean, functional etc.) are not necessarily distinct at local level due to the educational experiences and values of facilitators and participants. Similarly, specific educational innovations, such as LGM, may be transformed by the users, who in reality employ a mixture of teaching methods and interpret materials according to the local context and beliefs. The relationship between objectives and outcomes of a programme, between teaching methods and learning outcomes, should therefore not be seen as a simple equation to be balanced. A view of literacy planning as a more complex process where individuals bring their own "meaning" (Fullan, 1991) to objectives such as "empowerment" and specific educational innovations, points to the need for alternative research approaches to explore these differing perspectives.

Process versus products : using an ethnographic approach to plan programmes

My experience of using an ethnographic approach to research literacy programmes has shown the value of observing the process of literacy teaching, as compared with only measuring the outcomes (such as drop-out rates or what percentage pass the test). Observation of classes and meetings led to greater understanding of how planners, facilitators, class participants and other local people interact with each other over literacy and development interventions. As well as providing me with an insight into local beliefs around literacy, development and gender, this more holistic approach to research raised issues around how planning and literacy methodologies are used by planners. As I showed in relation to approaches to literacy teaching (Chapter 5), language policy (Chapter 4) and women's development approaches (Chapter 6), planners often introduce Western theoretical models or approaches (such as LGM or mother tongue teaching policy) to development programmes without considering local teaching situations or beliefs about education. Literacy and development approaches can be transformed in the implementation stage - not because facilitators are insufficiently 'trained' in these approaches but because they respond to local circumstances and demands. Planners therefore need to be made aware of the whole process of introducing new methodologies and that, for example, 'functional literacy' may not be a static label characterising an approach but describes just one influence on a literacy classroom. There is a danger otherwise, that such terminology remains at a symbolic rhetorical level particularly in plans and reports, only serving to widen the gap between policy makers and implementers. Theoretical models - such as the gender policy approaches - need to be regarded as analytical tools rather than descriptive labels. Instead of considering policy in terms of *outcomes*, language planners, for example, need to understand the social power relations that affect the whole process of policy and implementation. Introducing a mother tongue policy thus needs to be seen in the context of how languages are perceived and used by women and men of different ages in different communities and in varying situations. A transformative approach to planning, using ethnographic data, will allow 'providers' the opportunity to adapt policies, plans, and curriculum if, for example, mother tongue teaching does not prove empowering for women in practice. Such changes in policy may help to ensure that programmes are effective - not just in the "moral" (ideological) sense (Conlin, 1985:84) associated with anthropological research - but in technical terms of lowering drop-out rates.

Researching women's literacy programmes : what to look at?

Reports on women's literacy programme inevitably include a section on "barriers" and "obstacles" to learning, followed by prescriptions on how to overcome these constraints. Ballara (1991) is an example of such an approach, with sections on "obstacles to literacy" and "spreading the net" (linking literacy to other sectoral activities). When analysing my ethnographic data from HIL and Save fieldsites, I began by using some of the issues frequently addressed in evaluation reports (such as "drop out", "barriers to learning", "reasons for going to classes") but I also generated new analytical categories from my specific data. Several of the

key concepts that emerged might be useful in a more general context as a starting point for researchers or planners analysing women's literacy programmes (even if not using a long term ethnographic approach such as I did):

- development ideology (What ideas about development are apparent in the literacy curriculum, in the overall development programme? Where are these ideas coming from? How are they put across? When and how do participants and facilitators challenge ideas about literacy/ gender/ development?)

- age (Take age into account when analysing various issues : e.g. what does 'empowerment' mean to the older and younger women? What are the different reasons younger women learn literacy (as compared to older learners)? Is there greater drop-out amongst older or younger women - why? Does the development agency policy on language affect older learners differently from younger women? What problems do younger facilitators face as compared to older facilitators?)

- the literacy class as an institution (Consider the literacy class, like school, as a structure reproducing or challenging social relations: what does the fact of going to the class mean to women participants? How is the class viewed by outsiders (men, women, educated, children) - as a threat? as a useful facility? Do classes in the same programme have different images - why?)

- outside the classroom (Look at other institutions in the area in relation to the literacy class, including local schools and the development programme as a whole: how do other development ideologies, teaching methodologies, affect how participants and facilitators respond to the literacy programme?)

- drop-out (Rather than measuring how many women drop out, ask when (a specific point in the course or agricultural year?), why and who (older or younger groups, certain language speakers?) is dropping out? How is 'drop-out' regarded by class participants and irregular attenders?)

The researcher and the planner: who are they?

My role as an academic researcher outside the projects I describe influenced every aspect of the research: the data collected, classes attended and analysis of results. The role of the researcher can become more complex if using an ethnographic approach because of the holistic view gained, the sensitive nature of material and more flexibility to respond to many different perspectives on the programmes. Although I see these as the advantages of ethnography, there is a need for the researcher to work out her/his role more fully than I anticipated within the organisation and the envisaged relationship of the research with planning. My experiences suggest that within NGOs too, there could be more transparency about **who** is writing reports and doing research, in order to understand how their values have influenced the data. In many NGOs, there is not a strict division of labour between the planner and the researcher - the head of a sector is expected to carry out research (more often termed "baseline survey") and to design his/her own plans. Understanding the relationship between research and planning thus becomes more complicated and there is an even greater need for reflexivity about how the role of planner or of researcher has influenced the kind of information collected and presented in the form of plans.

Planning and literacy practices

Planning, for many development workers, is associated with the production of lengthy documents in English and 'development speak'. A challenge raised by an ethnographic research approach is to see if the planning processes of NGOs could draw more on the informal research that field staff carry out in the course of their daily work. A major achievement of PRA as a planning methodology is the focus now encouraged on how field-based staff and participants can contribute to central planning processes. Although new ways of presenting research findings have been experimented with (such as visually or through community meetings), still the range of information collected can be limited by the methods used (mapping, ranking etc.). Whilst in Arughat, I noticed that many Save staff took notes of activities in "daily diaries" similar to my own or recorded discussions and songs, but the actual reports that they produced for the central office were very factual accounts or lists of classes completed. The difficulty lies in how to convert ethnographic material into a form suitable for planning and policy level: NGOs could look more closely at how they can draw on field staff as researchers and provide less formal channels for "feedback" from the district to central offices. Analysing the purpose and audience of different kinds of reports would also enable staff to decide when to write in English or their mother tongue and the kind of material that would be appropriate to present.

Conclusion

Although the above recommendations are addressed to the providers of women's literacy programmes, I hope that the contribution of this book has been to bring into question the usual domination of the providers' perspective in educational research in developing countries. I began by discussing the "polarised perspectives" of recipients and providers of women's literacy programmes, not just in terms of their reasons for wanting literacy, but in how they express that ideology. There is not one kind of literacy or one kind of development: rather, the link between women's literacy and development needs to be seen in relation to the individuals involved - participants, facilitators and planners. To reach a greater understanding of the "interface" between local and international discourses, between participants and planners, I have broadened the approach usually taken towards researching women's literacy. I have avoided the "stereotyped and categorical we/they discourses of contrast, opposition and hierarchy which pervade discussions of 'Western' and 'non-western' societies" (Warren and Bourque, 1991: 302). In looking at the implications of my research methodology for planning, in terms of the texts produced, researcher's role and influence on planning methodologies, I have considered this book as a part of the research and planning process as well as a presentation of results.

The "language of analysis" (ibid.) that I have developed is based on a recognition of, rather than an attempt to resolve, the tensions between researching and planning women's literacy programmes. Rather than using theoretical models to *explain* programme objectives, I have set the models used by researchers and planners in the context of participants' own theories of literacy, language, gender and education. Avoiding terms like "motivation" to explain why participants do not attend classes, I have worked from an assumption that "drop out" is a social phenomenon to explore - possibly an instance of how individual women dispute the dominant discourse of planners and researchers. This study has focused on the 'interface' between planners and participants in order to understand the interaction between local and international development discourses. Development ideologies are expressed not just in words, but in practices, and the concept of *discourse* provides a way into analysing what is more usually viewed as inadequate implementation of literacy programmes. Study of the local and international discourses influencing how literacy interventions are planned and implemented enabled detailed analysis of development and literacy as social practices. My case study analysis in Chapters 4, 5 and 6 thus aimed to identify the factors (such as NGO structure and philosophy, local constructions of gender and systems of school education) that affected development interventions in practice in Arughat and Lalitpur. So, my analysis of literacy approaches showed how new and traditional teaching methodologies could become fused together in the local literacy classes due to influences outside the NGO's literacy component.

Although I have stressed continually the importance of bringing in facilitators', participants' and local outsiders' perspectives on literacy and development, I have also included more focused analysis of the providers' perspective. By considering fieldworkers and central level planners as individuals involved in a particular development discourse - rather than labelling them as 'planners' - I aimed to provide a way into understanding the relationship of

ethnography to different kinds of programme planning. The analysis of planning discourses, particularly their associated literacy practices (e.g. PRA diagrams, funding proposals), pointed more specifically to how and when my research approach could be relevant to planning: for example, in the kind of texts produced and encouraging a more reflexive role amongst planners. The dominant ideology and language of rational comprehensive planning affected how NGO staff in the field related to 'women' (as a homogeneous group) and responded to their needs (planning according to the project cycle stages). The *transformative* approach, where planning is conceptualised as "debate" (Moser, 1993), may prove more appropriate for literacy and language programming, if combined with participatory methods.

This book has aimed to analyse, not just how women participants respond to literacy interventions, but to explore whether literacy and development ideologies dominant amongst planners in developing countries can respond to changes already taking place in local communities. The link between women's literacy, gender and development needs to be seen not as a passive equation that planners can somehow calculate, but a dynamic process in which local women also begin to influence how that link is perceived by planners.

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APPENDIX 1:

MAP TO SHOW LOCATION OF CASE STUDY AREAS

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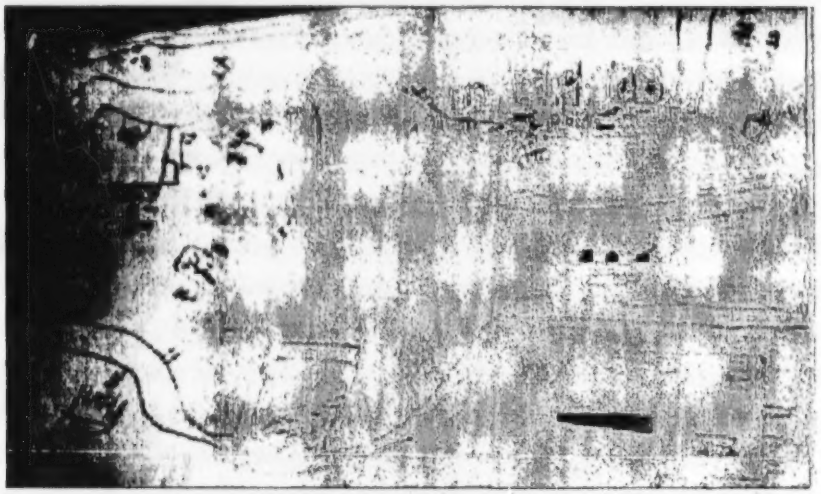
APPENDIX II:

EXAMPLES OF PRA ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED DURING FIELDWORK (see Chapters 2 and 4)

A PRA Social Map



This map was drawn by three women at Changanathali literacy class to show where they and the other class participants live. I then used the map for discussing issues such as why certain women chose not to come to the class and what had happened to the few girls in the village who had been to high school.

Cards Drawn by Literacy Participants to Represent Key Educational Institutions in the Area

I asked participants to draw pictures of the main educational institutions in their locality. They often referred to the adult literacy class as "iskool" (Nepali pronunciation of English word "school") so the class was included along with pictures of the two private English medium schools and the government primary school. I used these pictures to discuss ideas about education: such as which two "iskool" were more similar or different and why. Overleaf is a card drawn by a participant to represent Ananta Boarding School, the more expensive English medium school in Sanagow.

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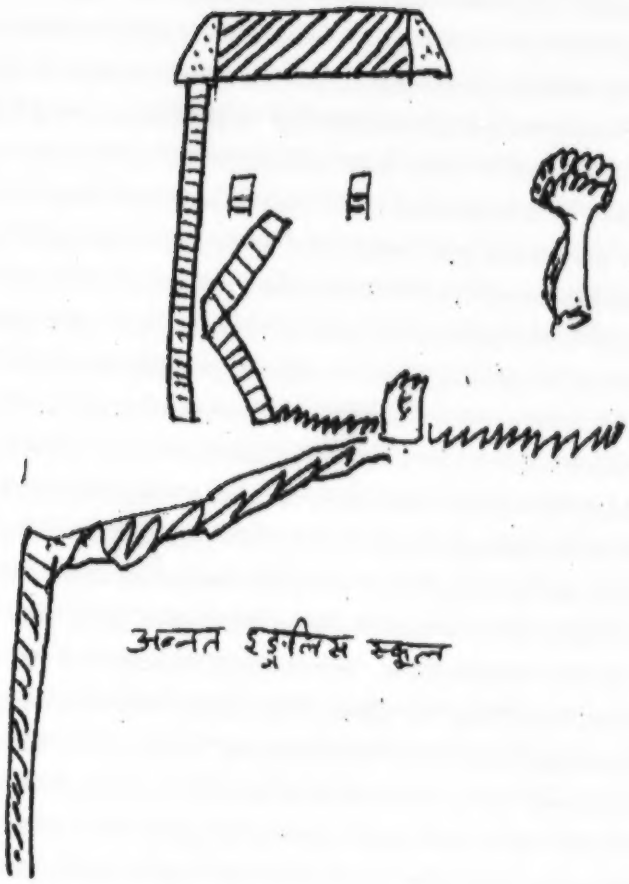

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APPENDIX III:

WHO'S WHO IN HIL AND SAVE

1. HIL

HIL's overall programme is based at the Model Hospital in Kathmandu and run by a team of doctors there. The HIL literacy programme is organised by a group of experienced trainers (accountable to HIL managers in Kathmandu) who are based in a small office/ meeting room in Thecho (half an hour from Kathmandu), next door to the HIL clinic. I refer to them as the **"literacy organisers"** or **"literacy team"**. They are all Newars and come from the Thecho area. They are:

Rajendra - head of the literacy component. He had recently left his job as a SPACE trainer in Sindhuli (Central Nepal) to concentrate on the HIL programme, but now also works on a consultancy basis giving training to staff of other agencies in various districts of Nepal.

Nagina who runs the HIL literacy programme in Rajendra's absence. She also works every day in HIL's Thecho clinic. She and Rajendra worked with SPACE in their original literacy programme in Lalitpur.

Class supervisors/ trainers (Based in Thecho, go out nightly to observe classes by turn, attend the Saturday training session, and help prepare the weekly lesson sheets):

- **Mani** studies law by day at campus level.

- **Rajan** works as a volunteer in the Thecho clinic by day.

- **Rajan,** a school teacher, is referred to as "the artist" since he prepares the pictures used for class discussion.

Facilitators

There are 15 facilitators (12 of them women - unmarried and in their early twenties) for the 13 literacy classes. I will mention by name only the facilitators who enter this thesis:

Sanagow (facilitators are all Newar)

Dos Maya is studying for the SLC - she eventually closes the class partly because of women attending irregularly but partly because of her own studies and the exam coming up. Her elder sister never went to school so attends Sharda's class.

Bina is studying for her Intermediate in Commerce by day at the campus in Kathmandu. She has taught adult literacy in the past for other development agencies. Her father is principal of the Sanagow English Boarding School.

Sharda has never been to school but was previously an adult class participant with SPACE and has many years experience of teaching and working in health. She weaves cloth in the daytime.

Changanathali:

Anita is a very keen health worker at the Tikkathali clinic but finds teaching at the adult class more difficult. She has failed the SLC exam three times and says she can't be bothered taking it again this year.

Astha, neighbour and friend of Anita, also works at the Tikkathali clinic. She started her class a bit later than Anita to accommodate the overflow from Anita's. She is very dedicated to the class, rarely taking a holiday and teaching seven nights a week.

Tikkathali:

Nirmala is also friends with Anita and Astha; they work together at the clinic. She is the only Chhetri (non Newari) facilitator in the area. She was very keen on teaching but nearly all the women stopped coming to the class early on, so her class closed shortly after I arrived.

Malatar (both Tamang speakers and Tamang caste - see Chapter 4):

Lalita was the only girl to study to class ten at the nearest high school, two hours walk from her village. She is still studying for her SLC.

Naresh is keen to get a paid job as he has to support the family. He had to leave school at class 8 when his father died, and is now starting an electrician's course in Kathmandu.

Health Assistants

HIL also employ health assistants who are based in the various clinics (known as HISC - Health Information Service Centres). They run a medicine shop, trained volunteers like Anita and Astha, and give talks at the literacy classes. A doctor from HIL visits the clinic once a week to give further training.

Hikmat : based at Malatar HISC (see Chapter 4)

Kamal: based at Sanagow HISC (see Chapter 4)

Also health assistants at Tikkathali, Harsidhi and Thecho (but not mentioned in the text)

2. Save Staff

Save Arughat office is divided into rooms according to sectors, with an office chief in charge (a woman). The various departments are:

(a) Agriculture

(b) Productivity (i.e. women's group formation and skills training): **Sahana** is head of department, with *motivators* reporting to her (staff members who spend most of their time in the villages). **Ramesh** is one of the local motivators.

(c) Education: sector head is **Devendra**, assisted by **Tika**. They run training programmes for facilitators together. There are also district-based supervisors, like **Gopal** who oversees the Thumi classes (see Chapter 6).

(d) Health

(e) Finance/ administration

Save Kathmandu office is also divided into sectoral units, all reporting to the Programme Director (who had previously been Education Sector Head). The regional director (an American) is responsible for programmes in other Asian countries as well as Nepal. He had previously been Country Director and worked extensively in developing the education sector. **Sarita** works in the training unit.

Facilitators

Alina was the only woman facilitator in Arughat area to teach the advanced literacy course (in Arutar). She had studied to intermediate level (IL) at Gorkha Campus, unlike facilitators from more remote areas, like Manbu and Thumi, who were sometimes still studying at school.

The Karshe facilitator (Chapter 6) had previously been a school teacher and was now running the class for a third year (the vocational course).

Arutar Village

I lived with an extended Newar family of about 17 members: **Dev Maya** and **Urmila** (sisters-in-law) are mentioned in the text (Chapters 4 and 6). Dev Maya works as a school teacher in Arughat. Usha studied at a Save literacy class three years ago: she is now Chairman of the Newar/Darai women's group they set up after the class. We lived next door to **Kieran**, the headmaster of Arutar school - his wife also studied at the literacy class three years ago and is now the secretary of the women's group.

Bhuwan (Newar) is vice chairman of the Village Development Committee and co-ordinates many of the committees in Arutar (see Chapter 6). He also runs the main village shop and owns the brick factory in Arutar.

Bikram (Brahmin) was known as the Arutar "politician" and before his arrest (see Chapter 6), was often to be found "doing politics" around the district and in the house where I stayed!

Arutar class participants are described in Chapter 3

APPENDIX IV:

NOTES ON THE NEPALI CASTE SYSTEM

The Nepali caste system is more complex than in India because of the number of ethnic groups of Tibeto-Burman origin who do not fit into the Hindu caste principles. Whilst some of the these groups are Buddhist religion (e.g. the Gurungs), others now follow Hinduism and have established their own caste system (e.g. the Newars).

A brief history

The caste system traditionally defined someone's position and occupation in society. At the top of the hierarchy were the Brahmins (originally priests and teachers), then Chhetris, the warrior caste, followed by the merchant caste and at the bottom, the lowest ranking untouchable castes. The lowest castes are also known as the "occupational" castes since they are the people who make things: tailors (Damai caste), shoemakers (Sarki), blacksmiths (Kami). "These castes are ranked along an axiom of purity and pollution, with the Brahmins and Chhetris considered to be the purest and the untouchables considered to be the most juto (ritually polluting)", Cox, 1995: 1.

The Muluki Ain (1854 national legal code which favoured higher castes) was rewritten in 1963 and 1990 to forbid caste-based discrimination in Nepal, yet in a 1994 study 84% of 1022 untouchables interviewed reported that they had been discriminated against (Sharma, 1994). For example, in rural areas where I have worked, untouchables (even professionals like teachers) were obliged to wash their own plate and cup in teashops as they were considered to be polluting. As a result of past and present informal discrimination, untouchables have still less access to education and managerial or administrative jobs. 99% of the untouchables surveyed in Sharma's study were pursuing their traditional caste occupation, subsistence agriculture, or menial laboring work.

Castes mentioned in this book

It is impossible to discuss all the castes and sub-castes (since the four tiers are divided into many further hierarchies), but I will briefly describe the main castes in Lalitpur (HIL) and Arutar (Save).

HIL area

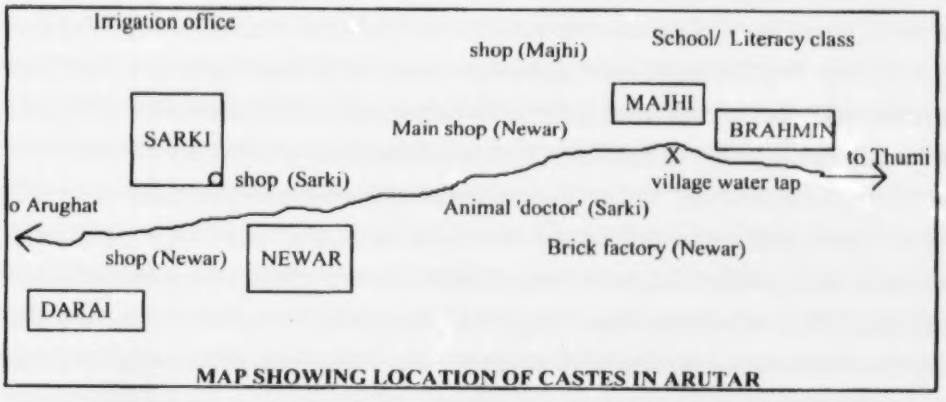
In HIL's Lalitpur area, the majority of settlements are **Newari** only. The people of Kathmandu Valley came to be known as the 'Newar' in the fifteenth century (Bista, 1991: 41). They are considered to be within the caste system, having been put just below the Chhetris in the

nineteenth century. Within the Newars, there is a complex sub-caste system, with Newari Bahuns (priests) at the top, followed by Shresthas (the merchant caste) and next Jyapu (the farmers). They also have their own untouchable castes, such as the Podes (sweepers). The literacy classes that I describe in Sanagow and Changanathali had a mixture of Shrestha and Jyapu Newari castes. Tikkathali, as I mention in Chapter 3, is a mixed caste area which includes Chhetris as well as Newars: many Chhetris come from the hills to work in the brick factories, a seasonal job. Though these labourers are poorer and often employed by the Newars, several Chhetris I met were scornful of the Newars (who were below them in the caste hierarchy), saying they were dirty and unhygienic. The Chhetri migrant labourers would build themselves temporary toilets even for the few months they were there, unlike the resident Newaris (see Chapter 5). There are also some Brahmins and other castes who have come from outside areas to set up schools, shops and for business. HIL works in one hilly area, Malatar (see Chapter 4), which is predominantly Tamang. Like the Gurungs, Tamangs are Buddhist and speak Tamang language, which has a different root from Nepali. They also fit into the matwali category, below Chhetris, but above the low castes.

Arutar village and surrounding area

In Arutar, the **Newars** are the wealthiest caste, making money through business enterprises as well as farming. They came originally from Kathmandu many generations back and were not traditionally part of the caste system. They now fit into the hierarchy just beneath the Chhetri (warrior) caste. They are therefore inferior according to the caste hierarchy, to Brahmins and Chhetris, but in this village, economically and politically the most powerful caste (see diagrams above representing secular and caste hierarchy, Bista 1991: 43). They have their own language, Newari, but as I discuss in Chapter 4, the Arutar Newars tend to have Nepali as their first language. Although the **Brahmins** are called to perform rituals for other castes still, their main occupation in Arutar is subsistence farming. The **Sarkis** are untouchables but in Arutar were richer (mainly because they migrated to India for work) than the **Majhi** caste who attended the literacy class. **Majhis** are fisher people, and though low caste, are not ritually polluting like the Sarkis. Nowadays, the men fish during a few months of the year, and they are all involved in subsistence farming, working for payment in kind on others' fields and wage labour, such as portering and carrying stones, in Arughat bazaar (which is predominantly Newar). The **Darai** caste are also fisher people, but in Arutar, they are not as poor as the Majhis as they migrate for work (several were in the Indian or Nepali army). One member of the literacy class was **Kami** (blacksmith), an untouchable caste. All the different castes live in their own defined area of the village (see map below) and people tend to refer to Bahungaon (Brahmin village) or Sarkigaon (Sarki village) or Majhigaon (Majhi village) within Arutar village. Although the literacy class had a mixture of castes and the women would sit next to each other, the higher caste women were very aware of their difference and often referred to the other women by caste (e.g. "the Kami") rather than by name. Further afield in Thumi area (see the women's meeting described in Chapter 6), there are more **Gurung** and **Magar** villages : these refer to ethnic groups with

their own mother tongue who are usually Buddhist. However they have been fitted into the caste system under Chhetris in the general category of Matwali (meaning "liquor drinkers") to which the Newars also belong.



MAP SHOWING LOCATION OF CASTES IN ARUTAR

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APPENDIX V:

HIL's LESSON SHEET (English name writing method, see Chapter 4)

अंग्रेजीमा नाम लेख्ने तरिका
ENGLISH NAME WRITING METHOD

अंग्रेजीमा नाम लेख्नु भन्दा पहिले निम्न अक्षरहरू कसरी बनेका हुन्छन् । भन्ने कुरा थाहा पाउनु पर्छ।जस्तै:-
(Before writing your name in English, it is necessary to know how the following letters are formed. Like :—)

क = क् + अ का = क् + आ कि = क् + इ की = क् + ई

Ka = K + a Ka = K + a Ki = K + i Kee = K + ee

कु = क् + उ कू = क् + ऊ के = क् + ए कै = क् + ऐ

Ku = K + u Koo = K + oo Ke = K + e Kai = K + ai

को = क् + ओ कौ = क् + औ कं = क् + अं क: = क + अ:

Ko = K + o Kau = K + au Kan = K + an Kah = K + ah

ख = ख् + अ गा = ग् + आ घि = घ् + इ

Kha = Kh + a Ga = G + a Ghi = Gh + i

ची = च् + ई छु = छ् + उ जू = ज + ऊ

Chee = Ch + ee Chhu = Chh + u Joo = J + oo

ते = त् + ए पै = प् + ऐ यो = य् + ओ

Te = T + e Poi = P + ai Yo = Y + o

लौ = ल् + औ सं = स् + अं क्षः = क्ष् + अः

Lau = L + au San = S + an Kshah = Ksh + ah

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APPENDIX VI:

SUSHILA'S STORY FROM SANGALO (SAVE USA, see Chapter 5)

ढलितको कथा र व्यथा

सुशिला उपरकोटी
आरुटार, गोरखा ।

दलित भनेको तल्लो वर्गका मानिसहरु हुन् । आफ्नो निश्चित बसाई नभएको, घरजग्गा, सम्पत्ती नभएको, अरुको नोकरको रुपमा काम गर्ने गरिब र बेसहाय मान्छेहरु पनि दलित हुन्छ । यिनीहरु आर्थिक, सामाजिक, सांस्कृतिक एवं धार्मिक नामले समाजबाट तिरस्कृत भएका हुन्छन् ।

हाम्रो समुदायमा विभिन्न थरिका मानिसहरु बसोबास गर्दछन् । कोही धनी, कोही गरिब, कोही तल्लो जातको वर्ग त कोही उपल्लो जातको वर्ग भन्दछन् । "नेपाल छत्तिस जातको एक साझा फुलवारी हो" आज पनि हाम्रो समाजमा जातिपातिको भेदभाव गरेर दलित जातिलाई दवाउने गर्दछन् । हामी महिलाहरुलाई पनि पधेरा, पाँवा, मन्दिर, पाटि जस्तो ठाउहरुमा सरासर जान दिदैनन् । यसरी उपल्लो वर्गले हेला गर्दा हामी उराउठ्यौं । हाम्रा बुवा आमाले पनि हाम्रो जातले पढ्न हुदैन भन्दथे । पढेर के गर्ने ? जागीर खान हुदैन भन्दथे । चिठी लेखेर बाहिर पठाउनु पर्दा उपल्लो वर्गमा जानु पर्दथ्यो । त्यसबेला एउटा चिठी लेख्न पनि विहान भरी काम गरि दिनु पर्दथ्यो । हाम्रो अवस्था देखेर हामीहरुलाई धेरै पिर लाग्छ । प्रौढ पढ्दा पनि ठुला जातका साथीहरु हामी देखि छुट्टै बस्दथे । तर पढेर केहि बुझेपछि दलितहरु पछाडी पर्नाका कारण शिक्षिण नहुनाले रहेछ भन्ने बुझ्यौं । आज भोली भने प्रौढ शिक्षा पढेर भए पनि हामीले आफ्नो मनमा लागेका केहि कुरा भन्न र लेख्न सक्ने भयौं । आजकाल हामीले आफैले चिठी लेख्न र पढ्न सक्ने भएपछि बाबु र आमाले पनि धेरै खुशी मान्नु भएको छ । त्यहि कारणले गर्दा भाई बहिनीहरुलाई पनि स्कूल पठाउनु भएको छ । आजकाल दलितहरुको स्कूल पढ्ने संख्या पनि बढेको छ । अशिक्षाको कारणले गर्दा दविएर र हेपिएर बस्नु पर्दा रहेछ ।

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Story and Pain of the Oppressed (English Translation)

Sushila Upakoti: Arutar, Gorkha

Oppressed means low caste people. Haven't got their own place to stay, no house, land or possessions, doing work as other people's servants. Poor and helpless people are also oppressed. They are cast out of society, economically, socially, culturally and in the name of religion.

In our society live various kinds of people. Some rich, some poor, some low caste, some called upper caste. "Nepal's thirty-six castes are like one common flower garden"[48]. Today in our society, due to caste discrimination low castes are oppressed. We also do not let women go to places like water holes, inns, temples. Our fathers and mothers used to say that our caste was not to study. What's the point of studying? Can't get a proper job, they used to say. When they wanted to write letters they had to go the upper castes who knew how to write. At that time they had to work all morning for others in order to have one letter written. Seeing our own condition, we feel very worried. Even at the adult class we had to sit apart from upper caste friends. But after studying, we realised that one of the reasons for being backward was our lack of education. Nowadays after studying in the adult class, we can say and write some of the things in our minds. Nowadays, mother and father are very pleased that we can read and write letters. For this reason they have started sending younger brothers and sisters to school. Nowadays the number of low castes at school has increased. It seems for lack of education we were dominated and suppressed.

****

When we go to fetch water, they say don't touch it

In that place too, we are untouchable

More than the men, the women suppress us

We are not allowed to touch public places and taps

We haven't got the rights given by the constitution

Now we have to make a new society

At times they eat very happily in our house

But when it comes to society, they look down on us

We have been like this for how long...

But now we don't sit quietly

Elder brother and sister, younger brother and sister, let's walk ahead

---

[48] This famous saying is quoted from the King Prithvi Narayan Shah who unified Nepal in the 18th. century.

By fighting, we'll get the rights given in the constitution

You too are people, we too are people

But you behave as if we are untouchable

Men say untouchable, women say untouchable

For how long can we face this injustice...

We have to go to repair clothes

Then we get one manna of rice

Just to give that rice, they feel so miserly

If you go close to them, they will say, you untouchable tailor[49]

We make hoes by casting raw iron

They rebuke us as katera and dangra[50]

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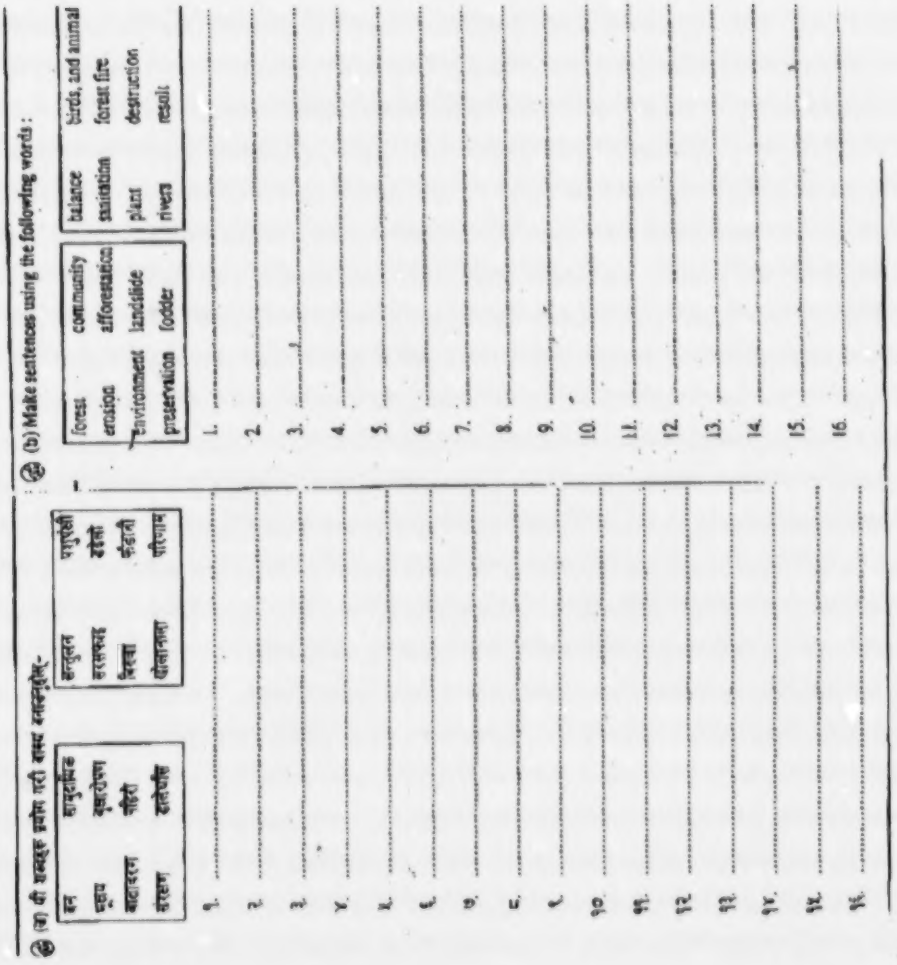
[49] Dhamini is the nickname given to women tailors (also meaning low caste as tailors belong to the lowest strata of society)

[50] Nicknames for blacksmiths (another low caste occupation)

APPENDIX VII:

ANGILA'S LESSON FROM KOSALEE (SAVE USA, see Chapter 5)



(a) दी हुवहुक शब्दों की सहायता से रिक्त स्थान भरिए :-

वन	वनोन्मूलित	जलधारण	पशुओं
वृक्ष	वृक्षारोपण	क्षमता	की
वातावरण	नदियों	बचाव	कहानी
संरक्षण	वनोपज	पौधशाला	परिणाम

1. .....
2. .....
3. .....
4. .....
5. .....
6. .....
7. .....
8. .....
9. .....
10. .....
11. .....
12. .....
13. .....
14. .....
15. .....
16. .....

(b) Make sentences using the following words :

forest	community	balance	birds, and animal
erosion	afforestation	sanitation	forest fire
environment	landslide	plant	destruction
preservation	fodder	rivers	result

1. .....
2. .....
3. .....
4. .....
5. .....
6. .....
7. .....
8. .....
9. .....
10. .....
11. .....
12. .....
13. .....
14. .....
15. .....
16. .....

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APPENDIX VIII :

CHANDRA BAHADUR'S GRIEVANCE (A story from Kosalee about repairing a village water tank, with English translation, see Chapter 5)

चन्द्रबहादुरको गुनासो

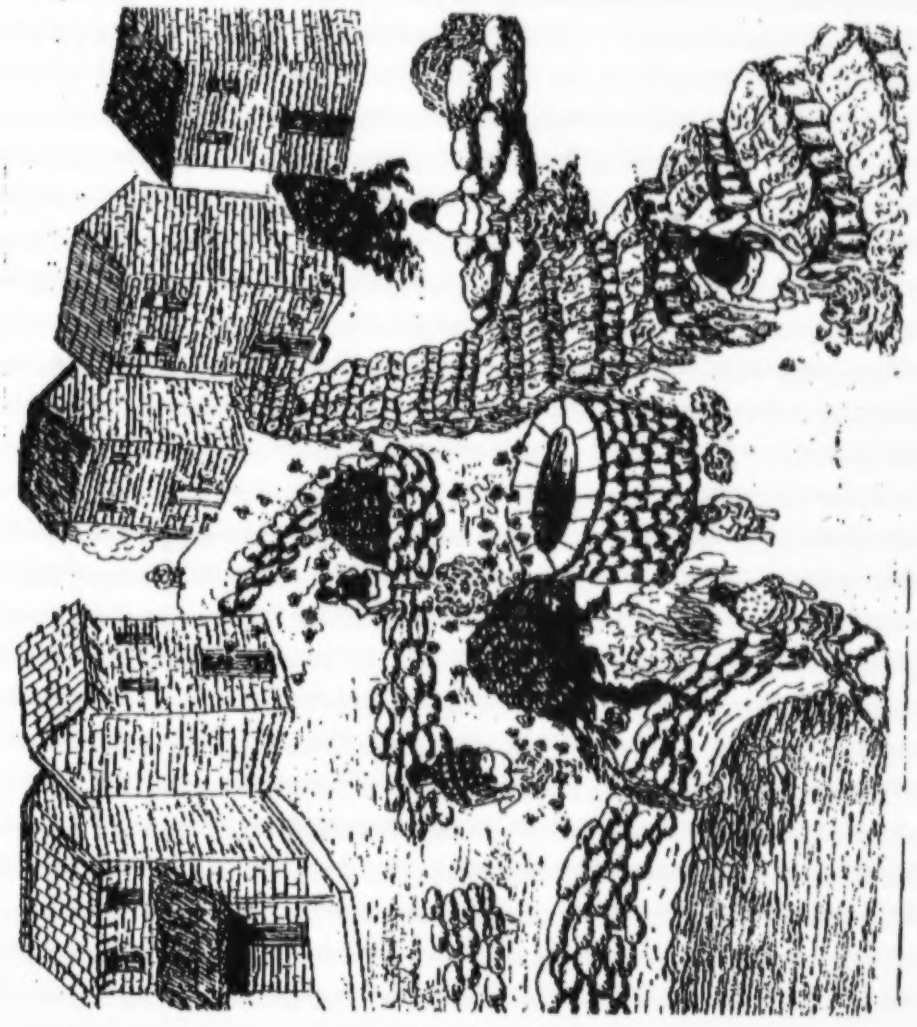
चन्द्रबहादुरको कुरा सुनेर रामबहादुर, कान्छे दुवै जना छक्क परे। हर्कबहादुर पनि छक्क परेको। चन्द्रबहादुर आफ्नो कुरामा कायम थिएनन्। केहीबेरपछि हर्कबहादुरले हाँसेर भन्यो- "मैले जवाफ दिएँ, मैले त केही बुझिन। मैले त्यसरी बाबुको भए ....."

"हैन भाइ, रोटी चिन्ता नौठा कुरा छैन। तँ पनि बस्तीका मरेको हो। ठेलाई थाहा नै नहोला हुन आगुहालें।" भाले हुनुमा जस्तै कराएजस्तो चन्द्रबहादुर।

"हेर हर्क

APPENDIX IX :

PICTURE DRAWN BY HIL ARTIST FOR DISCUSSION OF "TOILETS" (see Chapter 5)



by Ratna Bhakta Maharjan, Thecho

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APPENDIX X:

KOSALEE MATHEMATICS MATHEMATICS (SAVE, see Chapter 5)

(क) तलको भरा पदहरू र बाट पदाउनुहोस् -

सय	दश	एक
५	५	७
२	७	५
८	३	२

एक बाटको हिसाबमा एक, दश र सयका बेग्ला बेग्लै बाकसहरू छन् । एकको बाकसमा रहेको पुर्ति अङ्क ७ र १२ भयो । अब १२ लाई एकको बाकसमा राख्न मिलेन । किनभने १२ लाईको एक दश र दुई हो । त्यसकारण अगाडिको २ लाई एक बाटामा राखिदिने छ । एक दशको बाटामा भएको बाकसमा पनि बाटिएको पूर्ण । एकको बाटाबाट दशको बाटामा लगिएको अङ्कलाई हातलागी भनिन्छ । यहाँ दशको बाटामा भएको अङ्क ७ र १ बोढदा १२ हुन्छ र एकको बाटाबाट आएको हातलागी १ गरि बोढदा १३ हुन्छ । अब १३ मा ३ लाई सय राखे बाटामा र १ लाई दशै बाटामा भएको अङ्कमा बोढ्नु पर्छ । सबको बाटामा भएको ५ र २ बोढदा ७ हुन्छ र हातलागी एक बोढदा ८ हुन आउँछ ।

(a) Read the following instructions and add the figures given below :

Hundred	Tens	Unit
5	5	7
2	7	5
8	3	2

For addition, different boxes have been set for unit, ten and hundred. When 7 and 5 in the unit box are added, the sum comes to be 12. Since 12 means one 10 and 2 we cannot put it in unit box. As such, 2 has been put in unit box and one 10 has been added to the figures of ten box. The figure transferred from unit box to ten box is called 'carry over'. Thus when 5 and 7 in ten box are added, the sum comes to be 12 to which we have 1 to be carried over from unit box making it to 13. Now, we can put only 3 in ten box and carry over 1 to hundred box and add to the figures of hundred box. Thus, when 5 and 2 in hundred box are added, the sum comes to be 7 and when the carried over figure 1 is added to it, the sum in hundred box comes to be 8.

हिसाब गर्नुहोस् -

सय	दश	एक
४	७	६
२	३	५
१	३	५

सय	दश	एक
४	५	७
२	०	४
१	०	१

सय	दश	एक
६	३	७
१	४	२
३	४	५

सय	दश	एक
१	४	३
३	०	४
२	१	९

Hundred	Ten	Unit
4	7	6
1	3	5

Hundred	Ten	Unit
5	9	4
2	0	4
1	0	1

Hundred	Ten	Unit
1	4	3
2	0	5
3	4	0
2	1	1

Hundred	Ten	Unit
5	0	6
2	9	7

Hundred	Ten	Unit
6	3	7
1	4	2
2	4	5

Hundred	Ten	Unit
1	5	3
2	4	0
3	0	4
1	6	4

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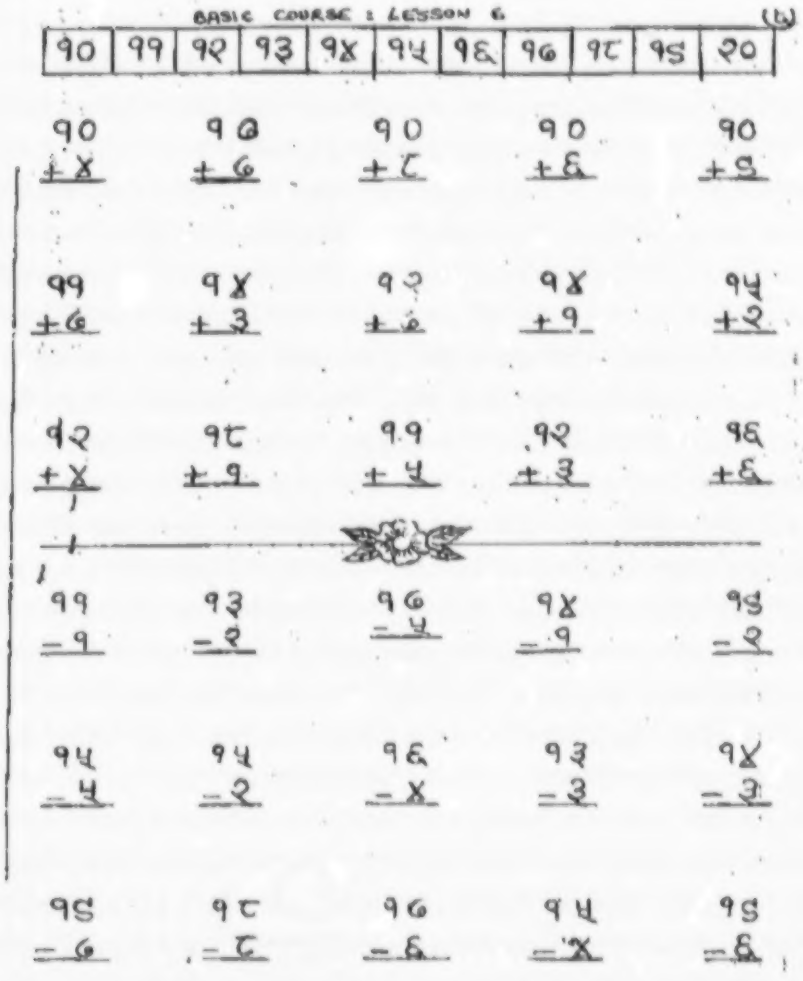
APPENDIX XI:

HIL MATHEMATICS SHEETS (see Chapter 5)



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APPENDIX XII:

RECORD FORMS TO BE COMPLETED BY SAVE WOMEN'S GROUPS EVERY MONTH AND SENT TO DISTRICT OFFICE (see Chapter 6)

Monthly progress report to be sent by the group to the office management committee form no. 1.
समूहले कार्यालयमा/व्यवस्थापन समितिमा पठाउने मासिक प्रगति प्रतिवेदन फारम नं. १,

(a) (b) Ward no. (c) VDC
(क) समूहको नाम : Name of group (ख) वडा नं. _____ (ग) गा.वि.स. _____
(d) (e)
(घ) जम्मा सदस्य संख्या: Total no members (ङ) मासिक बचत दर : monthly saving rate
(ङ) विवाहित सदस्य संख्या: Total no married (ट) हाल जम्मा समूहकोष : Total group savings to date
(च) अविवाहित सदस्य संख्या: Total no unmarried (ठ) हाल लगानीमा भएको कूल रकम : Total amount invested to date
(छ) साक्षर सदस्य संख्या : Literate no (ड) बैंकमा भएको रकम : Amount in bank
(ज) निरक्षर सदस्य संख्या : Illiterate no (ढ) नगद बाकी रकम : Cash in hand
(झ) हाल समूहकोष बाट ऋण लिइरहेको सदस्य संख्या: Number of members currently taking loan from fund

_____ महिनाको प्रगति प्रतिवेदन Monthly progress report

Date of meeting
बैठक बसेको मिति : __/__/__ Participants
सहभागी संख्या : _____

(क) कियाकलापहरु Programme	कार्य विवरण	सहभागी संख्या
१. सामुदायिक विकास कार्यक्रम Community development Programme	Details of activity	No. of participants
२. सामुहिक कोष वृद्धि गर्न समूहले गरेको काम Action taken by group to increase their fund		
३. बाल विकास कार्यक्रम Child devel. programme		

नोट:
कार्य विवरणमा त्यस महिनामा गरेको काम मात्र उल्लेख गर्ने।

Note:
Only write details of work done this month.

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APPENDIX XIII:

SAVE USA FUNDING PROPOSAL

Extract from "A Project Proposal for ECD Program in Manbu and Thumi VDCs of Gorkha District", Save The Children US, Area Office Arughat (written in English by members of Arughat staff to present to external funder).

These projects will focus on women, children and primary teachers. A total of 1000 mothers, 500 children and 15 teachers are included as the major target groups/ beneficiaries. Globally, women and children are the key resources of development. Women are playing a vital role in generating the whole human race. But their condition is very poor. On the context of Nepal, only 25% female are literate and 27% primary students pass the primary level. Women spend on average 16 hours of their day in their domestic work and other jobs. They do not get even a minute to think about themselves. Women are traditionally backward in the community and depressed by the male members of the household. Early morning to late night they have to work for the husband, children, animals and also manage to feed them all. Sometimes they have to leave the kitchen without eating anything themselves.

In these two VDCs[51], women are spending their lives in a doubly worse condition than the above given case. Women are equal to work with man. On the other hand small children are as backward as their mothers. Both sons and daughters are equally responsible for assisting their parents. On average 90% of the total children are spending their lives on the back side of education. So there is no discrimination in education (son-daughter) because both are engaged in domestic work. Very early in life, a 10/12 aged girl can't managed her health and dress how we can think good care will be taken of the baby will be borned. Children grow up in the cradle alone. In this areas some mothers leave their children tied by a rope to the house pillar. Approximately 5/6 are borned from a single mother. As per the studies of these areas mother and children are mentally and physically depressed.

Aims and objectives:

Considering all these problems; ECD[52] program is proposed in Manbu and Thumi VDCs, by setting the followings objectives:

1. To make aware on social discrimination; (son-daughter, early marriage)

2. To provide skill of child rearing and caring in rural context.

---

[51] Village Development Committee, smallest administrative unit, also used for referring to particular geographical districts

[52] Early Childhood Development programme : basic education for mothers in health, sanitation and child care.

3. To give practical skill of health and sanitation

4. To train primary teachers on ECD.

Action Plan:

Considering all the problems of these VDCs and technical overview on the ECD activities, the following action-plan has been prepared.

Sn	Description of activities	Date of implementation	Duration of activities	Responsible person	Remarks
1	Site selection/ meeting, orientation of each activity	March/April	10 days	SC/US Education Productivity	
2	Pre-test Previous Condition	May	1 week	"	
3	Facilitator training	May last	1 week	"	
4	Child to child class	June/July	1 month	"	
5	Parenting Education Class	June/July	2 month	"	
6	Primary Teachers Training on ECD	May	5 days	"	
7	Impact Study of the program	August	1 week	"	

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